No. 464 L2
1879

FRANK LESLIE'S

BOYS' AND GIRLS' WEEKLY.

An Illustrated Journal of Amusement, Adventure, and Instruction.

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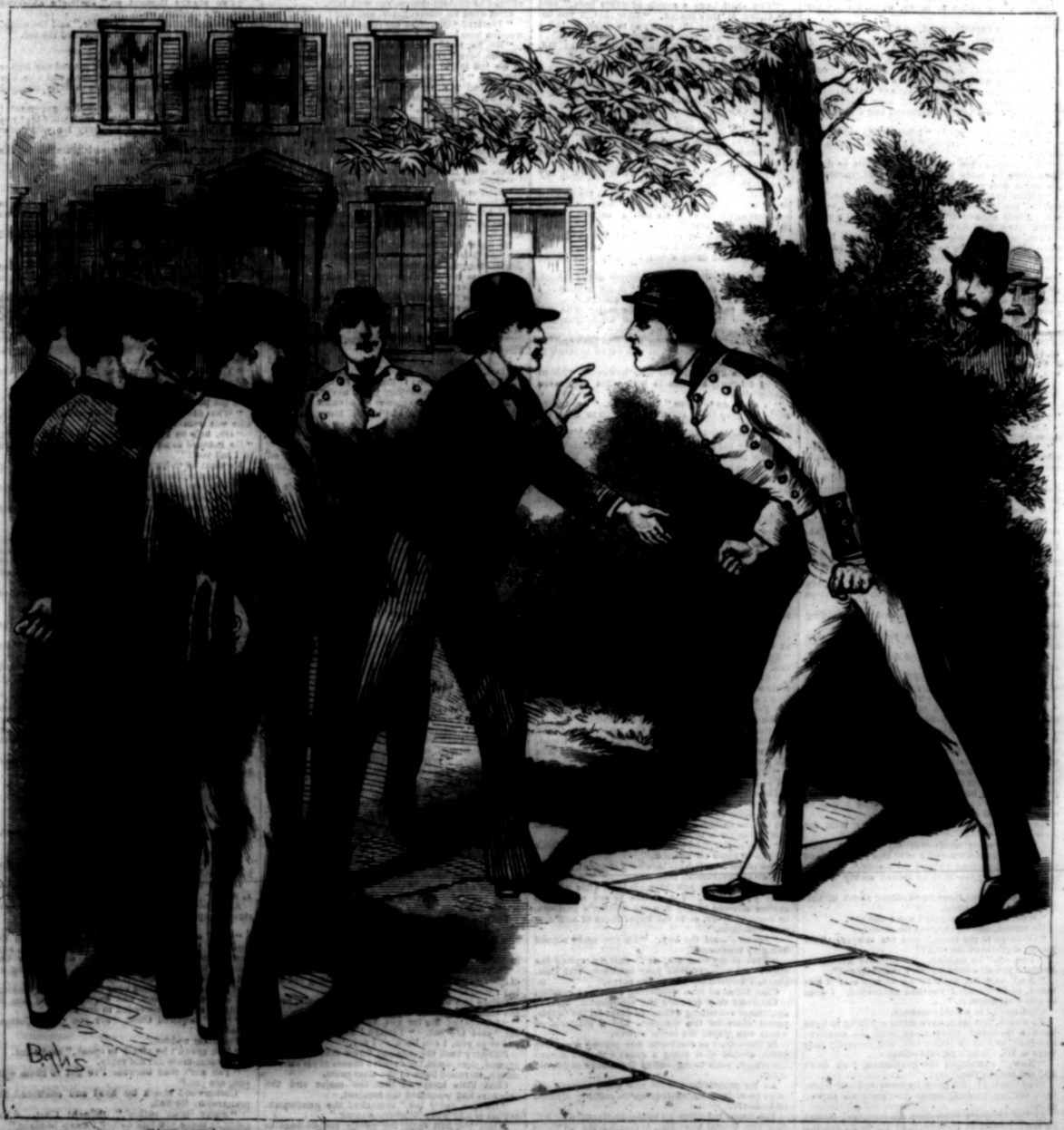
No. 692.—Vol. XXVII. NEW YORK, JANUARY 24, 1880. Five Cents a Copy, $2.50 a Year, Postage Free.

Inquisitive Clinton; Or, He Wanted to Know All about It.

By COMMODORE AH-LOOK.



"'See here,' responded Clint; 'I don't pretend to be as high-toned as you are, but I never yet let a feller insult me as you've done.'"

READ ONE NEW SERIAL STORY, "INQUISITIVE CLINTON," WHICH BEGAN IN NO. 690.

INQUISITIVE CLINTON;

Or,

HE WANTED TO KNOW ALL ABOUT IT.

By COMMODORE AH-LOOK,

Author of "KEEP YOUR BOUNDS," "INVENTIVE BEN," "ORVILLE AND DAN," "THE CHUMS AT HARVARD COLLEGE," "THROUGH THE HEART OF JAPAN," ETC.

CHAPTER X.

CLINT PROMISES TO REFORM.

"WHAT does this all mean?" shrilly demanded Kate.

The lawyer was not shot, the charge having gone into the ceiling.

Jarvis had withdrawn his head in time to see the old man raise his gun, and had wisely dropped upon the floor.

When the woman spoke he rose and said:

"We were endeavoring to discover the will!"

"Oh!" faintly moaned Clint, "please let me out. The wheels are burying themselves in my flesh!"

"I'd really like to know what this means?" once more remarked Kate.

Much to his chagrin, Jarvis had to explain how he came to be there at that time in the morning, after doing which he ordered her husband to help him lower the clock, so that they could get at the works and release the prisoner.

This took some time to accomplish, and when Clint was free they found his hand was badly injured, and that the paper was merely an old letter.

"Serves you right!" snapped Kate, and taking a lamp, she was about to retire, when the lawyer said:

"Have you anything good for a bruise?"

"No," she said, "I haven't."

"What did Mr. Biggleswade use?" he asked.

"Stuff he made himself," she said.

"Get me some, and a strip of linen rag," continued Jarvis, who noticed the boy was in pain.

Kate went, grumbling, to a bureau that stood on the other side of the parlor, and after searching a while produced a bottle of liniment and a roll of old linen.

"Here!" she growled; "I forgot this stuff."

"Ah!" exclaimed Jarvis, "I know that. It's excellent for bruises."

"Mr. Biggleswade used it a year afore he died! Soon after he made his will," she said, uncorking the bottle with her teeth.

"I wish he had given the document to me," remarked the lawyer. "Come here, my boy, we've made a nice mess of it," adding: "Strip off a piece of that linen, Mrs. Ketchum."

Clint, who had been holding his hand like a wounded bear does its paw, submitted it to the gentleman, and the latter said:

"It's lucky for you the skin is not broken."

"Yes," nodded the boy. "I tell you, them wheels pinched."

As he spoke Kate unrolled the bundle of rags and gave a cry.

"Hello!" exclaimed Jarvis, turning sharply round. "What is it?"

Her face was pale, and her hands trembled so that she could scarcely hold the package.

There, in the middle of the rags, was the missing will.

Her eyes gleamed with triumph as she said:

"Guess I've earned the reward!"

"Yes," nodded Jarvis, seizing the document; "you shall have it, Kate."

"And what am I to get for all I've gone through?" demanded Clinton.

"You?" said the lawyer, as he hurriedly satisfied himself the paper was intact. "Oh, you! Well, we'll do something for you."

He bound the lad's hand in a rag saturated with the liniment, and after bidding him good-morning, retired, leaving him with the old man and woman, who were crazy with joy at their discovery.

"Yew thought you'd come here and rob us of the reward, eh?" jeered Kate. "Oh, I do hate a mean, pitiful, inquisitive feller wen's prison."

It was hard on the lad, and he, for the first time in his life, understood how small he had behaved.

"Guess I'll go to bed," he remarked.

And up-stairs he went, where, finding a spare room, he threw himself on the mattress and slept until seven o'clock.

When he awoke the old woman was standing over him.

"Say," she remarked, "be you going to stay here or not?"

He rose, and finding his hand was all right again, said:

"I'm sorry I ever took this job. I wouldn't stay with you for a million dollars a year."

"I knowed you was a spy all 'long," she observed, "so I plied the work on to you. Now, go! If I had a son like you I'd disown him."

Clint left Sandy Hollow a wiser boy than he was when he entered it.

He was no coward, and had made up his mind to tell his uncle and aunt everything.

People in Poquam spied on one another, and spent their lives in prying into other folks' business, and he had been brought up to consider inquisitiveness an indication of smartness—now he began to see it in its true light.

He walked into Babylon, and took the train for New York.

"Wonder what uncle will say?" he thought. "I've had a rough time of it over this business, and now that old woman will get the money."

After crossing the ferry he moved slowly toward City Hall Park.

When he arrived there he hesitated about mounting to Mr Colby's office.

"Well, Clinton," he heard some one say.

He turned, and there stood his relative.

"Come up to my room," said tile lawyer. "So you've discovered the will?"

"Yes, sir," he nodded. "I suppose Mr. Jarvis has told you all about my—my misfortunes?"

"No," said his uncle; "he merely said it was found, so I concluded you had succeeded. I want to know all about it."

Clint smiled in a sickly manner.

He would, just then, have given anything to have been a thousand miles away from his relative; however, he had to follow him, and presently they were in Mr. Colby's private office.

"Now," exclaimed the gentleman, "sit down and tell me the fun."

Poor Clinton! He grew by turns red and white, then seating himself, began to relate his experiences.

At first his uncle controlled his features; though he soon yielded to the effects of the boy's comical narration, and roared with laughter.

After describing everything, Clint, who had recovered his usual free-and-easy Poquam manner, said:

"I'm pleased it makes you laf. I thought you would git mad."

"My poor boy," chuckled his relative, "I'm glad you have had such a lesson. Promise me you will profit by it, and I will forgive you and send you to school."

"You won't tell Aunt Hannah, will you?" he pleaded.

"No," said Mr. Colby; "not until you leave left."

Clinton gave the required promise, which he seriously meant to keep, little imagining it was an impossibility for him to do so.

That afternoon the gentleman who was interested in the finding of the will called at the office, and after being closeted with Jarvis, sent for Clint and gave him a hundred dollars, saying:

"Now, after this, never pry into any one's business."

The boy thanked him for the money and remarked:

"If I hadn't been inquisitive, mister, the will might never have bin discovered."

This made them all laugh.

Clint sent the bills to his mother with the following note:

"MRS. LEE—The results of my inquisitiveness. I'm going to school. CLINT."

When his aunt saw him that evening, she what he termed laughed at him with her eyes, but did not refer to having read her journal.

The next morning he started with his uncle for Newville-on-the-Hudson, at which place there was an excellent school for just such boys as Clinton Lee.

"You shall have a couple of years here," said Mr. Colby, as they landed. "After that, if you desire to be a lawyer, I'll send you to college. All I ask you to do is to give up peeping and prying."

"Oh, certainly, sir," glibly answered the lad. "How much a year will it cost?"

"Five hundred dollars, my son."

"Can you afford it, uncle?"

"Certainly I can."

"Have you got lots of money?"

"Yes, Clinton. Enough for you and me."

"Hum! Say, if you've got so much, why don't you help my mother?"

The lawyer's face flushed, and he said:

"Clinton, asking impertinent questions is as bad as listening."

"Oh," exclaimed the lad, "I don't think it any harm to speak up for mother."

"That will do," replied his uncle, as they halted before the entrance to a large establishment. "You need not again speak to me on that subject. I will provide for my sister."

In a few minutes more they were inside the house, and were ushered into a reception-room.

After a brief delay a tall, soldierly man joined them.

He was Major Holt, the proprietor of the school.

"This lad," said Mr. Colby, "is my nephew. I am desirous of placing him in your charge."

"I have one vacancy," said the major, who evidently knew the lawyer. "Shall be delighted to take any one connected with yourself."

Some general conversation followed between the gentlemen, after which Clint was asked to retire to the next room.

Of course he complied, not, however, without feeling intensely anxious to hear what they were talking about.

"It won't do to listen," he thought. "I promised uncle I'd drop that; still I'd much like to know all about it."

The moments appeared like hours until he was summoned back, when he saw by the major's face that the latter was amused by something his companion had been relating.

"Clinton," said Mr. Colby, "I have informed Major Holt of your little weakness."

"Is that what he's grinning about?" drawled the boy.

His relative did not reply to the query, but continued:

"This is a military school, and you will wear a uniform like a soldier."

"I want to know!" was the lad's smiling response. "Am I to hev a gun an' learn to shewt?"

"Not until later on," observed the major, who could scarcely keep serious. "You will be instructed in the higher branches, be drilled, and taught how to behave like a gentleman."

This puzzled Clint.

"Now, good-by for the present," said his uncle, as the major retired to the far end of the room. "Remember what you promised, and learn all you can. I'll provide for your mother."

"Say," whispered the boy, "get her a position somewhere, so that she can earn her own living. Don't send her money."

"You're a good fellow," said the lawyer, as he shook his nephew's hand. "I understand."

After a brief chat with the major Mr. Colby started homeward, leaving Clint with his new friend.

"Clinton," said the gentleman, "your uncle tells me you are very inquisitive?"

"Wal, some folks think so," drawled the boy. "I've given it up."

The major smiled, and went on:

"Yes, I understand. Now, I don't expect you will be able to check yourself all at once—that is not human nature. What I want you to do is, when you feel anxious to know anything, think."

"Yes, mister," he nodded, "I dew. I allus think I'd like to know all about it."

The major averted his face for a moment, in order to hide his merriment, then said:

"I shall forgive you three offenses, after which I must punish you. The cadets in my school are neither allowed to pry into one another's business, to listen at doors, or to ask impertinent or unnecessary questions."

"Jes so!" said the boy. "Do you make a good living by teaching?"

"That is my business, sir!" sharply replied the other. "I will overlook your ignorance this time. Come, I'll introduce you to the corps."

Clint followed him, wondering what was coming.

Presently they reached the schoolroom, a large apartment containing a hundred desks for the cadets, raised seats for the teachers, and a platform on which was placed the major's chair.

In the centre of the room was placed a wooden horse, astride of it being a cadet who had missed his lesson, such being one of the modes of punishment.

As the proprietor and his new pupil entered the boys rose, drew themselves up in military attitude and saluted.

The major led Clint up to the platform, and bidding him ascend after him, presented the lad to his new companions, saying:

"Cadets, this is Cadet Clinton Lee."

The boys saluted Clint, who chuckled by way of reply, and pointing to the space on the wooden steed, drawled:

"Say, is that feller on the hoss there the esp'n?"

CHAPTER XI.

CADET COTTONWOOD.

A DEAD silence followed Clint's speech. The boy on the horse scowled.

The cadets laughed in their sleeves.

The teachers glanced at the major and chuckled. The latter conquered his desire to smile, and said to his unconscious new pupil:

"Cadet Lee, the cadet on the horse has missed his recitation; mind you do not have to take a position behind him. The seat accommodates more than one at a time."

His tone was so unmistakable that Clint thought it best not to ask any more questions.

A desk was allotted to him, and he was informed his number would be one hundred.

At recess he went into the drill-yard and sauntered round.

Presently the boy who had ornamented the horse approached him, and said, in a low, menacing tone:

"What did you mean by insulting me?"

"Who are you?" coolly inquired Clint. "Are you anybody in particular?"

"I'm Cadet Pillsbury—the one who was riding the trotter just now."

"Trotter?" grinned Clinton. "What do you mean, eh?"

Their conversation attracted the attention of the boys, who gathered round them in order to see how the new cadet would behave.

Fighting not being permitted, the lads were obliged to content themselves with talk.

Clint eyed his interrogator, and said:

"Trotter! Oh, you're the fellow who was on that wooden hoss! Say, I didn't see you trot any!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" laughed the spectators.

"See here," cried Pillsbury, drawing himself up to his full height and regarding the newcomer disdainfully, "I'm a gentleman, and therefore will not condescend to a personal encounter with a fellow like you. I'm a gentleman—understand?"

"You don't look it," drawled Clint.

"He, he, he!" tittered the others.

Pillsbury grew redder in the face than ever.

"Where do you come from?" he demanded.

"I thought you never asked inquisitive questions," said Clint.

This made the listeners roar again.

"Good for you, colonel," cried one.

"Well said, general," shouted another.

"Caught it this time, Pill, eh?" said a third.

Pillsbury was a bully, and as he stood taller than any other cadet, was considered the leader of the school.

He knew if he could not turn the laugh against the new boy his power was gone, so he regarded him contemptuously and said:

"I guess you sold newspapers for a living before you came here?"

"Did you?" drawled Clinton. "Come to think of it, I believe I once saw you running up Broadway yellin', 'Extra *Telegram!* full account of fire!'"

"Rah!" cried the boys; "you'll do, number hundred."

Pillsbury ground his teeth, snorted and clinched his fists.

"You're a common fellow," he said. "For two pins I'd give you something you'd never forget."

As he uttered this sentence he advanced close to Clinton, breathed hard, and looked him straight in the eye.

That rather enjoyed the other's anger.

"Beg my pardon," continued the bully.

The lad drew back a pace or two and glanced coolly at his adversary, then said to the laughing spectators.

"Will any of you cadets lend me a couple of pins?"

"Here you are, here you are," cried a dozen voices, and a score of the articles were thrust forward for his acceptance.

He quietly selected two, and turning to Pillsbury, said, with a low bow:

"There's your pins, *general*."

The cadet glared at him.

"There's your pins, Pills—what's your name?" he repeated. "Take 'em. Now, what are you going to give me as a forget-me-not?"

"Rah!" yelled the crowd; "go it, number hundred."

Pillsbury regarded him with lofty disdain, after which he turned upon his heel, and was about to retreat, when Clint stepped before him, and holding the pins under his nose, said, in a low, meaning tone:

"See here, you'd best take them."

"I—I—decline to—to," smiled the sur.

"Well," chuckled the boy, winking at the spectators, "then I shall have to make you."

"I beg to inform you," he nervously remarked the other, "that fighting is not permitted in this school. We're gentlemen, understand."

"See here," responded Clint, "I don't pretend to be as high-toned as you are, but I never yet let a feller insult me as you've done."

"You insulted me first before all the school," snorted the bully. "It's fortunate for you that you're—you're not anywhere else."

Clint smiled at the crowd in such a comical manner that they all roared with laughter.

"And pray, what would you do if we were somewhere else?" he asked.

"No matter," said the other. "I don't want to have anything more to say to you."

"You've got to take these pins, boy," remarked Clint, once more thrusting them under the blusterer's nose.

The spectators were as excited as they could be. They disliked Pillsbury, and felt delighted to see him taken down.

"Ya-h-h!" they cried. "Well done, number hundred!"

There stood Clint, with his homely face expressive of quiet determination, and his ears sticking out like bat's wings.

Before him was his would-be master, pale, nervous and as savage as a treed coon.

"I borrowed 'em for you, an' you've got to take 'em," said the lad. "Sorry I am not such a tall talker as you, I can back all I say."

Pillsbury took the pins and threw them on to the ground, then, amid the derisive cheers of his schoolmates, marched back to the class-room.

Clint, little imagining that the major and the teachers had witnessed the incident,

"He is a noble lad," remarked the gentleman. "That is just what Pillsbury wanted."

When the bell rang the cadets rushed back to the building, and Clint was told to go to the tailor's, in order to be measured for his uniform, a boy being detailed to accompany him.

That afternoon he was put into a class, and went into the drill-class with the awkward squad.

At first he was dismissed apparent to be stupid; however, he soon learned.

They had supper at six o'clock, then an hour's recreation, an hour's study, half an hour in the main hall, singing and skylarking, then prayers and bugle for bed.

As Clint was filing off to his room one of the teachers said:

"The major desires to see you for a moment in the library."

The boy obeyed, where that was, and upon being directed, presented himself before the principal.

"Cadet Lee," said the gentleman, as Clint saluted him, "I saw and overheard what passed between yourself and Cadet Pillsbury this morning."

"Now I'm going to catch it," thought the lad.

"I must say he behaved very rudely," continued the other. "I sent for you to express my approbation of your conduct, at the same time to say the matter must end here, and you will have to mutually apologize before the other cadets."

"I didn't hit him," said Clint.

"I know," replied the major. "I was watching you."

"Oh, you were, eh?" said the lad, reproachfully. "You told me this morning that you did not allow listening and peeping—didn't you, sir?"

"Not on the part of the cadets," said the major, coughing away a desire to laugh.

"Ah!" ejaculated the boy. "I see! When I grow up I can listen all I want to."

"There are circumstances under which listening and peeping are justifiable," replied the gentleman.

"I've always thought so," smilingly observed Clint. "I un'stan', sir."

"You must address me as major," said the other. "Were you in the army?" demanded the lad.

"Yes!"

"Ever in a battle?"

The gentleman, who had never ranked any higher than lieutenant in the National Guard, and who, like many others, had assumed the title of major, changed color, and said:

"Of course! I was in several engagements! Now," saluting, "go to bed and remember that you must apologize to Cadet Pillsbury for your rudeness."

Clint returned the salute and marched to the door; then, halting, whispered:

"Major!"

"What is it, cadet?"

"I can listen if I think the circumstances ——"

"No," sharply answered the other. "You're to break yourself of the habit; it is both mean and disgraceful!"

The boy did not scare a bit; he merely snickered and said:

"Of course I kin peep!"

The major sprang out of his chair, and, advancing to the smiling youth, seized his collar and shook him, saying:

"If you dare to give me impudence, I'll—punish you!"

"What have I done now?" was the boy's amazed inquiry. "I didn't—mean—to be impudent!"

The major glanced at him for a moment, then, releasing the astonished lad, said:

"You are the greenest specimen I ever met. Go to bed!"

Clint got out of the room as quickly as possible.

In the passage he encountered Pillsbury.

"What did the major say?" demanded the bully, who was trembling with anxiety.

"Oh, he's as much a cat!" chuckled Clinton. "He listened to all we said, and—won't you catch it, I tell you!"

He went off to his room, leaving Pillsbury tapping faintly on the library door.

"Which is my bed?" he inquired of the teacher on duty for the night.

"That one, marked number one hundred," said the gentleman.

"Who sleeps in the other?" asked Clint.

"Cadet Cottonwood, number ninety-nine," was the response. "Read the printed orders hung on the wall and get into bed right away, or you'll find yourself in the dark. The gas is turned out at half after nine."

He was making for the door when Clinton called him back, saying:

"Cotton-wood—isn't that a queer name?"

"Is that all you want to know?" growled the other.

"Oh, no!" cheerfully answered the boy. "Sit down, sonny, and smoke yourself at home."

The teacher said something in a low tone and vanished, leaving the new-comer whistling softly, as though puzzled.

"Never knew such touchy folks in my born days," he mused. "When I asked the major about his button he didn't seem to like it, and he got tearing mad when I inquired whether I couldn't peep into he did. Pears to me they are a mighty short-tempered lot here."

He moved toward the notice on the wall and read as follows:

MAJOR HOLT'S MILITARY SCHOOL.

SUMMER ORDERS.

Cadets will Observe the following Rules:

No conversation is permitted after bugle for "out lights."

Tobacco in any form is prohibited.

Wine, beer, fermented and distilled liquors are forbidden.

Cadets to turn out promptly at "first bugle," 6 A. M.

Any cadet wilfully disobeying above will be instantly expelled from the school.

"Oh!" exclaimed the boy, as he concluded his reading. "Well, I ain't one who cares to talk, any how. I never was between, and don't know the taste of a fight. I'm coming out, after living at old Kate's, guess I kin git up at any hour."

While he was thinking over this he undressed, and looking the room, and having allotted him in military fashion, proceeded to disrobe.

"Say," inquired Clint, "are you Cadet Cottonwood?"

The other nodded.

"You needn't be afraid to speak," said Clint.

His room-mate did not reply.

"You ain't mad because I've got to chum with you, are you?"

Cottonwood shook his head and continued his preparation for bed.

"Sulky 'bout suthin'," thought Clint. "I'm going to make you talk before I sleep to-night."

By that time his comrade was between the sheets.

"See here, Cottonwood!" he exclaimed, advancing to the other's bed, "I don't quite understand this treatment. I want to know what you mean!"

Instead of replying, the boy glanced at him and uttered a deep sigh.

CHAPTER XII.

CLINT EFFECTUALLY PREVENTS HIMSELF FROM LISTENING.

ALTHOUGH Clint repeated his question a dozen times Cottonwood did not utter a word.

"Well, I must say you beat all," growled the boy, as the bugle sounded in the corridor and the gas went out. "Guess you're mad, anyhow."

His room-mate evidently heard him, for he gave a low laugh.

"Say!" cried the now thoroughly aroused boy, giving the other a shake, "speak, won't you?"

Still no reply.

Clint was in a perspiration of inquisitiveness; rules or no rules, he meant to make Cottonwood talk.

"I s'pose you're a chum of Cadet Pillsbury!" he said, in a loud voice. "You calculate to rile me by not answering my questions, eh?"

The boy in bed again uttered a peculiar laugh.

"Oh, you kin laff," continued his irate companion. "You kin laff all you like, but you'll not get a wink of sleep until you've said outside', if I her to sit up all night!"

Once more Cottonwood laughed, this time louder than before.

"See here!" cried Clint, "if you think you're funny I don't!"

"Silence in number fifty!" called the teacher on duty.

Clinton was too much exasperated to notice this, and went on:

"I'm not used to your ways yet, but can tell you this: I don't think much of a feller who won't speak to his room-mate, any how. If you don't answer me I'll sit up and talk to you until you do."

His words only made Cottonwood utter his peculiar laugh.

"Here!" said Clint, grasping him, angrily, and giving the boy a shake; "speak, won't you?"

"Number one hundred, room fifty, turn out, dress yourself and come here!" cried the teacher.

"I'm not in bed yet," bawled the boy. "I kean't git a word out of Cottonwood."

This reply made the cadets in the other rooms titter, and caused Clinton's comrade to laugh again.

"Cadet Lee," sternly observed the teacher, "come here!"

Clint quitted the room, and moved toward the apartment occupied by the speaker.

As he did so he heard the cadets snickering.

"Want me, major?" he said, to the irate teacher.

This question convulsed the listeners, while the gentleman to whom it was addressed said, in a severe tone:

"Are you not aware that talking, after out lights, is prohibited?"

I asked Cottonwood a civil question, and he was mad 'bout suthin' and wouldn't answer me," drawled the culprit.

He, he, he," went the cadets, no longer able to restrain their merriment.

The teacher coughed; he dared not laugh.

"I don't see what them fellows are he-heeing 'bout!" surlily remarked Clinton.

"Cadet Lee," presently began the other, "I am not a major; I am Captain Bellamy."

"Oh," drawled the boy, "I thought you were all majors here."

This reply induced another peal of laughter on the part of the cadets.

"Silence in the dormitories, or I'll parade the entire command," cried the teacher.

You might have heard a mouse move.

The cadets knew their man, and though almost dying of suppressed laughter, after that kept profoundly quiet.

"Cadet Lee," presently remarked the secretly-amused gentleman, "are you aware that your comrade, Cadet Cottonwood, is *dumb*?"

"Is what?" gasped the boy.

"Is dumb," repeated the teacher. "He had a severe attack of sickness a year ago, and has lost his speech."

"I want tew know," murmured Clint. "Tell us about it, will yew, captain? I thought he acted kinder strange. I'm real sorry for him, so I am."

"You may go back to your room. I shall report you for having disobeyed orders."

The amazed lad saluted and retired, presently returning, and as he peeped round the doorpost, whispering:

"Say, captain, kin he hear?"

"Go to bed this instant, sir," said the teacher. "You'll be severely punished for this."

"I want to know," murmured the boy. "S'pose you'll put me on that horse, eh?"

As he did not receive any reply he marched back to his sleeping-apartment, and on finding Cottonwood slumbering, proceeded to go to bed.

At six A.M. he was aroused by the bugle.

His comrade was up and dressed, and was reading.

Clinton tumbled out, and slipping on his garments, approached his room-mate, saying:

"Cottonwood, I'm real sorry I annoyed you last night."

The dumb boy produced a piece of paper and a pencil, and wrote:

"I broke my slate last evening, so could not communicate with you. I hope you are not angry. I can hear what you say. I was not always unable to speak."

"I am ashamed of my inquisitiveness," said Clint, offering his hand, which his comrade took. "How did you come to lose your speech? Where are you from? Is your father alive? Have you any brothers or sisters? How long have you been as you are?"

Cottonwood's eyes sparkled merrily, for he was full of fun, and he wrote on the paper:

"Come down-stairs or we shall be late for our bath. I'll answer all your questions during recess."

They descended the stairs and crossed to a building containing a swimming-bath and conveniences for the toilet.

On seeing him the cadets exchanged glances and laughed significantly.

They all knew of his experience with his comrade, and were tickled about it.

Cottonwood, unlike a person dumb from his birth, had a prospect of regaining the use of his speech, and while the affliction was annoying, did not feel melancholy about it; indeed, he often made sport of his trouble.

Clint saw the cadets strip and dive into the water, so proceeded to follow their example.

Unfortunately, he could not swim, notwithstanding which to be went.

As may be imagined, when he found himself sinking, he uttered a yell and clutched at everybody within his reach, grasping Pillsbury by the hair and almost drowning him.

The laughing cadets permitted the new arrival to nearly fill with water, then went to his rescue.

Clint had such a good grab on Pillsbury's locks that the boys were compelled to drag out the pair together.

"Oh!" he gasped, "where am I?"

"Here, you leave go," snarled Pillsbury.

"What does all this mean?" demanded the captain of the bath. "Can't you swim, Cadet Lee?"

"Guess I shall know how after I've tried a time or two," he replied, with a ghastly smile. "I swallowed too much water this time."

"You must be crazy to dive in without knowing how to swim," snapped Pillsbury. "You've pulled a lot of my hair out."

"You've got plenty *left*," said Clinton, alluding to the other's long locks. "I thought you was a girl the first time I set eyes on you."

This retort made the cadets laugh, Pillsbury being the only one in the school who wore his hair over an inch in length.

The captain of the bath promised to give Clint instruction in the art of swimming, then sounded the bugle for dressing.

After all were clothed they formed in ranks, broke into files two abreast, and marched into the class-room to prayers.

It was a new life to Clinton, who rapidly learned how to behave like the others.

When prayers were over they went into the dining-hall and partook of breakfast—oatmeal, milk, baked fish and coffee, with all the bread and butter they wanted.

At the conclusion of the meal they rushed into the drill-ground and played until nine o'clock, when they paraded, were inspected and marched into the class-room.

As they took their seats the major said, in a loud voice:

"Cadets number seventeen and one hundred!"

On hearing this, Pillsbury rose, marched up to the platform and saluted, seeing which Clint did the same.

The other cadets looked as solemn as owls.

"Cadet Pillsbury," observed the major, "you yesterday insulted Cadet Lee; apologize to him and shake hands!"

The bully obeyed, but made up his mind to, what he termed, "get even" with the new boy.

"Cadet Lee," said the principal, "you yesterday behaved rudely to Cadet Pillsbury; apologize and shake hands!"

Clint turned to the sulky youth, and, extending his hand, said, in a frank, manly voice:

"I'm sorry you feel bad; give me back the pins."

Even the major smiled at this, the boys and teachers laughing audibly.

"Cadet Pillsbury, attention; right wheel, quick march!" commanded the major.

The lad obeyed, as did Clinton, who was gleefully marching back to his seat when the major ordered him to return, saying:

"I have not dismissed you, Cadet Lee! I see you are required for talking after out lights and for being inquisitive."

"I'm guilty!" said Clint.

"You promised not to do it," continued the gentleman. "Captain Bellamy reports that you disregarded his caution and disturbed his entire command."

"Ye-as!" drawled the culprit. "I heard 'em all laffin'! it was funny—don't you think? I didn't know Cottonwood was dumb!"

The major could not reply for a few moments, during which the cadets grinned like one person.

Presently the principal said:

"Cadet Lee, you are sentenced to an hour on the horse!"

"You promised to forgive *me* three times," murmured the boy. "You won't go back on your word, major, will you?"

This was too much for Holt, who, after joining in the laugh that followed, said:

"Cadet Lee, attention! Right wheel! quick march!" then rang the bell for the classes to begin recitation.

When recess came he summoned Clinton to him and remarked:

"Is it innocence or ignorance that causes you to give such replies?"

"We-ll, I guess it's *innocence*," drawled the lad.

The major bit his mustache and continued:

"After this if you disobey the regulations, I shall punish you—understand?"

"Yes, major."

"Now go and enjoy yourself, and try not to act so foolishly. Remember it is a very easy thing to make a lot of boys laugh. I suppose you are not anxious to be considered the idiot of the school?"

"No, major," hesitating. "May I ask a question?"

"*One* only!" was the stern reply.

"Am I to stop listening altogether, major?"

"Yes, entirely," said the gentleman.

Clint saluted and retired.

That afternoon he went to the tailor, in order to have his uniform tried on.

Cottonwood accompanied him, and was very particular about the fit of the clothes.

"There, I guess that will do," remarked the man, as he pinned in the back of the jacket. "I'll have the suit ready by nine o'clock this evening, so that you can wear it for to-morrow's parade."

Clint thanked him, he being very anxious to don the dress.

"Say," he remarked, pointing to a roll of wadding on a shelf, "will you give me a piece of that?"

"Certainly," nodded the tailor, unrolling the package. "How much do you want?"

The boy indicated a square of about two inches, and the man cut off the required portion and handed it to him.

After they regained the street, Clinton's comrade wrote on his slate:

"For what purpose do you require that cotton-wool?"

"To plug up my ears," said Clint. "The major told me I was to stop listening altogether, and I'm going to do it."

Cottonwood looked very serious, and wrote:

"Do not attempt any such thing. You will be punished if you do. The major will think you wish to be impudent."

"Oh, he knows better than that," returned the boy. "He distinctly told me I wasn't to listen, so I'm going to prevent myself. Surely he won't punish me for obeying him?"

CHAPTER XIII.

THE MAJOR'S MOTHER.

COTTONWOOD found it useless to argue with his new comrade, and gave up the attempt.

Clint purchased a small slate and pencil, and when they returned to the school carefully plugged his ears with the wadding.

The cadets quickly discovered this, and had considerable fun at his expense, notwithstanding which he persisted in his determination.

That evening being Saturday, the boys assembled in the class-room in order to give recitations and sing, the major presiding, and directing who should entertain the others.

After several of the lads had spoken pieces and sung, he noticed the cadets prancing at Clint, who sat with his slate slung round his neck as solemn as an owl.

"Cadet Lee," said the gentleman, "can you sing or recite?"

No reply.

"Cadet Lee," this time in a louder tone, "can you sing or recite?"

The boy looked at him with a vacant expression.

"Cadet Lee," in a very loud voice, "I am speaking to you!"

Cottonwood, who was seated next to the culprit, wrote on his slate:

"The major is addressing you."

Up started Clint, who marched to the principal, and after saluting, handed him his slate and pencil, saying, very politely:

"Please, major, will you write what you have to say? I cannot hear anything."

The gentleman stared at him for a moment, being at first utterly unable to comprehend what he meant.

He could hear the cadets tittering, and suspecting the truth, glared at the boy's ears, then pulling out one of the plugs, said:

"Go to my library, sir. You are under arrest."

"You told me I wasn't to listen, major," he pleaded, looking ruefully round at his convulsed schoolfellows. "What could I do? I kean't help hearing things."

"Cadet Lee," thundered the other, "go to my library at once, and do not quit it until I join you."

There was no suppressing the roar of laughter that accompanied Clint's exit, even the major joining in it.

"I'm always in the wrong," murmured the unfortunate cadet, as he tucked his slate under his arm and walked toward the house. "Wish I'd never left Poquam."

In a moment he was in the study—a large room handsomely furnished, and containing a fine glass tank filled with water-reptiles and fishes.

He amused himself with this for a while, the actions of the various creatures greatly interesting him.

Presently the door was softly opened and in came a sweet-faced, gentle-looking old woman, rather meanly clad, but evidently a lady.

She went straight to a corner and seated herself, never so much as glancing at the boy.

There she sat, as motionless as a waxwork figure.

She excited Clint's curiosity, and, forgetting all about his promise, he approached her, and, saluting, said:

"Good-evening, ma'am."

"Good-evening," she quietly replied. "You mustn't talk to me. My son does not like it."

"Your son?" said the lad. "Are you the major's mother?"

"I am proud to say I am," she answered. "Please don't speak to me. It he comes in and finds you doing it he will be very angry."

"Oh, you needn't be afraid," said Clint. "He won't be here for a long time. Do you know you're very like my mother in the face, and you talk in the same sort of voice?"

"Indeed!" she exclaimed. "Do you love your mother?"

"Well, I rayther reckon I do!" he drawled. "Hasn't she waved years an' years to raise me—pinched an' and starved herself to get me everything? I think she's just the finest woman that ever lived!"

The old lady glanced at him and remarked, in a tremulous voice:

"Go on, tell me all about her; only listen for the major—he objects to my talking to his cadets."

Clint seated himself across a chair near her, and, resting his chin on the back, related some of his adventures, at which she alternately laughed and wept.

When he concluded she rose and, taking his hands in hers, said:

"My boy, always think as much of your mother as you do now. If my son——"

Here she stopped and sobbed.

"See here, ma'am," whispered Clinton; "don't he treat you right?"

"Hush!" she said. "He is a good son—a good son—only——"

The tears trickled down her aged face as she spoke, and she was unable to proceed, so great was her agitation.

Clint felt badly. He had a big, generous heart, and could not bear to witness her distress.

He pulled out a handkerchief from his pocket and dried her eyes, saying:

"Tell me all about it. I want to know!"

Just then they heard the major speaking in the corridor.

"Oh, dear!" she exclaimed. "You won't tell him what I said, will you? He's a very good son to me!"

"Trust me, ma'am," he hurriedly answered; "I'll not tell."

He squeezed her hand, and slipping behind her, hid himself in a curtained recess.

So quickly did he accomplish this she thought he had quitted the room by a door opening into the adjoining hallway.

The major met some one in the corridor, and did not enter the apartment for several moments; meanwhile she had composed herself, and on saluting him in no manner betrayed that she had been weeping.

"Oh," he said, in a cold tone, "you're here, eh?"

"Yes, major," she faltered. "You—forgot to send me the money last week, so I thought I'd call. I don't like to run in debt."

Her son seated himself at a desk, and unlocking a drawer, remarked:

"I wish you wouldn't come bothering here, mother. If you'd only go and live somewhere out of Newville I would like it better."

"I can't go among strangers," she said. "I'm sorry you're angry with me."

"Here's your two weeks' money—ten dollars," he observed.

"You promised me a trifle for clothes," she murmured, as she rose and took the bills.

"Can't you save something out of your allowance?" he grumbled. "I have an expensive family to maintain, and every dollar is of consequence to me."

He little thought Clint was listening.

The boy's eyes were flashing with indignation, his hands were clinched, and but for his promise to the gentle old lady he would have revealed himself then and there.

Like many otherwise good men, Major Holt had learned to regard his mother as a burden, and to be annoyed at her presence.

Mrs. Holt had toiled and denied herself in order to give him a good education, while he, taking her devotion as a matter of course, had never thought of her sacrifices on his behalf.

"I am sorry you can't afford it," she said, in a tremulous voice. "Thank you for this, my son. Good-night."

The major rang a bell, and when a servant came, said:

"Show this lady out. Good-night, madam."

Clint waited until the poor old woman had quitted the house, then, pulling aside the curtain, advanced into the room, saying:

"My goodness! Ain't you ashamed of yourself, major?"

The latter rose, and gazed on him with a mingled expression of anger and amazement, and then demanded:

"Have you been listening?"

"Yes," boldly answered the boy; "I was behind that curtain all the time."

"You were, eh?" said the major, turning pale with rage.

"Yes," said Clint; "I heard you tell your old mother that you couldn't afford to give her a trifle for clothes."

Suddenly pointing to the vases on the chimney-piece: "Why don't you auction some of them, if you're so hard up?"

The major gasped, and his accuser continued:

"When you were a little chap, did she buy things for herself and let you go shabby? I reckon not. I guess she went without, lots of times, to give you what you fancied. My mother did."

"Stop!" thundered the major, rising, threateningly.

"Oh, you kin hit me," said the lad. "I know you feel mad, but it's *true*. Major, I may be green, but I'd rather be myself than you."

There was not a trace of impudence in Clinton's tone.

He was simply terribly in earnest, and, spite of his anger, the other understood it.

"Lee," he said, changing his manner, "I will go to my mother and ask her pardon. You have opened my eyes. Shake hands. In future I will not treat her as I have done."

"That's good," was Clint's delighted response. "I'm sorry I had to listen," smiling naively. "I thought the circumstances justified my doing it."

"Can I trust to your honor not to speak of what has passed here this evening?" inquired the other.

"Certainly, major, was the frank reply. "Now, please tell me what punishment I am to have for plugging my ears with wool?"

"Why did you do it?" asked the gentleman.

Clint explained.

"Cadet Lee," said the major, "I want you to act sensibly. Close your ears when you feel anxious to listen to what is not intended for your information, and keep them open at all other times. Remember the old saying—'Listeners seldom hear any good of themselves.'"

"Or of others," quietly remarked the boy. "Major, I understand. I'll try and do different. You see, in Poquam, folks didn't consider it wrong to peek and hear. I'll conquer it."

They shook hands and he retired, leaving the major a better man than he had ever been.

"Well," inquired Cottonwood, in writing, when Clint joined him in the dormitory, "what punishment did you get?"

His comrade answered:

"He forgave me, and I'm going to listen all I like after this."

The next day he donned his uniform, and felt as proud as a peacock.

They paraded, attended church and went to Sunday-school, and in the evening were invited to join the major's family circle.

This was evidently an uncommon occurrence, for the cadets got themselves up in a most gorgeous manner.

The major's wife and daughters entertained them, and gave the boys a treat of ice-cream and strawberries.

In the midst of the feast their principal entered, escorting his parent, who, dressed in handsome costume, looked as happy as a queen.

"Cadets," he said, introducing her, "this lady is my mother, who has consented to reside with me."

The lads saluted, and one by one advanced and shook her hand.

Clint was the last, and as she returned his grasp she glanced at him, and said, in a low, sweet tone:

"God bless you!"

"Guess I did some good by listening," he thought, when he retired to rest. "I like the major. He knows he's in the wrong, and ain't too proud to repent."

The next day Clinton began his regular studies, and made so much progress that in a month he was promoted to the rank of corporal, an honor he communicated to his mother by telegram.

Spite of all he could do he found it impossible to refrain from being inquisitive, and the cadets had lots of fun at his expense.

One Wednesday afternoon, when they were strolling in the woods, he noticed some of the boys gazing up at a hole in the trunk of a tree.

They whispered to one another as he neared them, and he heard Pillsbury say:

"Don't tell Clint."

"Hello!" he cried; "what's in there?"

The lads laughed.

"Don't you try to find out," observed one.

"Oh, but I'm going to," he said.

"I wouldn't," remarked another.

Clint pulled off his jacket, and glancing at the grinning crowd, said:

"Boys, I'm going to fetch the critter out of that hole. I don't care what it is."

"Rah!" they cried; "well done, Inquisitive Clint!"

He could just embrace the trunk with his arms and limbs.

The hole was in a fork of the tree, about fifteen feet from the ground.

Up, up he shinned, panting and blowing with the exertion, his face betraying his great anxiety to know what was in the cavity.

"Rah!" shouted the boys; "stick to it."

"I'm going to!" he gasped.

[To be continued.]

"Inquisitive Clinton" was commenced in No. 420.

EDUCATION.—A few weeks ago an English matron who was summoned before a police court on account of her son's non-attendance at school defended herself by the plea that she did not approve of the education. When pressed to specify a definite ground of complaint, she said that the boy had already been taught to spell "fathers" with a "p."

CAPTAIN ELPHINSTONE'S FIRESHIP.

A Sailor's Exploit in Turkish Waters.

IT is a bright, beautiful Summer morning, in the early part of July, 1770, and the blue waters of the Mediterranean sparkle in the cloudless sunshine, while, high overhead, the green, sloping hills of Anatolia stand out in bold relief, for many a mile, against the warm, dreamy sky.

On the smooth surface of Tchesmé Bay, ordinarily so silent and lovely, float nine gallant ships of war, with the Turkish flag flaming over them—a fleet which, with its brisling cannon and hundreds of red-capped seamen, might well appear able to defy any foe that it may meet. And yet it is not so; for this formidable squadron has taken refuge in this narrow mouth, and that these Turkish dogs lie in a circle all round it, and that their fire will catch our leading vessels in front and on both sides at once, before the rest can get up to help them? What do you think the Empress will say to us if we come back to tell her that we have thrown away her finest fleet?"

"What does your Excellency think she will say to us if we come back and tell her we have done *nothing*?" asked the young officer, quietly.

Orloff growled a savage curse between his teeth, and seemed to be on the verge of a second outbreak, when he was checked by a very unexpected interruption. A shrill shout was heard outside, the cabin-door flew open, and in burst, with all the confidence of an established pet, a bright-eyed boy of ten, in sailor costume, waving his battered straw hat triumphantly over his curly head.

CAPTAIN ELPHINSTONE'S FIRESHIP.—"HE RAN UP TO THE ADMIRAL'S SEAT AS UNHESITATINGLY AS IF THAT BURLY POTENTATE HAD BEEN ONLY A CABIN-BOY."

He ran up to the admiral's seat as unhesitatingly as if that burly potentate had been only a cabin-boy, and seizing the giant's huge, clumsy hand in both his own, shouted gleefully:

"What d'ye think, Grigorie, Grigorievitch?" [Gregory, son of Gregory—the usual form of address in Russia.] "daddy and I have been all round the Turkish fleet in a boat, and they never knew we were there."

"Round the Turkish fleet!" echoed Orloff, in amazement.

"Rather," said the boy, grinning, as if this hairbreadth escape were the finest joke in the world; "and the old sleepy-heads never even challenged us! Nice look-out they must keep, mustn't they? And daddy says he's got a plan to settle them, if you'll only let him try. You will, won't you? *Do* just let us have one crack at them, and I'll give you the biggest orange I've got!"

This was too much even for Russian discipline, and a roar of laughter shook the whole cabin, Orloff's bellowing guffaw being heard above all.

"And where is your father?" asked the admiral.

"Here!" answered a deep voice, and in the doorway stood a short, thickset man, with an iron mouth and stern gray eye, who looked fully worthy of the name of "Fighting Dick," which he had borne from the hour when, as a dashing midshipman, he led the way through storm and darkness up the rocking sides of the French frigate at Oleron, till he stood as Captain Richard Elphinstone of the Russian Navy, in the presence of his admiral and the council of war.

"Your excellency," said he, saluting, "I've just been having a look at these fellows, and it's plain they mean to stay where they are. It's no use trying to tempt them out; for although the admiral's a born fool," and he looked at Orloff as if he knew another admiral of the same pattern, "their second in command, Hassan Bey, is a smart fellow, and won't be easily trapped."

"Well, all that won't help us much," said Orloff, snappishly; for though the son was a universal favorite, the father's short manner and contempt of Russian seamanship was anything but popular. "Have you any plan, that's the question?"

The Englishman uttered a few words so low as to be scarcely audible, but whatever they were, they had a magical effect.

The officers looked up at him as if doubting whether they had heard aright; and Orloff's heavy mouth gaped in stolid amazement.

"And you're really willing to risk it all by yourself?" said he, staring. Elphinstone bowed, with a gleam of stern enjoyment in his small gray eyes.

"Well, I don't think you can do it; but if you like to try, you shall have all you ask for. Gentlemen, the council is adjourned."

Early next morning there might have been seen lying among the stately Russian men-of-war a small Turkish coasting-vessel, captured some days before, and around her swarmed a crowd of sailors of divers nationalities—sallow Russians, squat, yellow-haired Finns, burly Englishmen, slim, black-eyed Greeks—all busily engaged in lowering into her a number of casks, which stood ranged in line on the deck of the flagship.

A distant observer would have taken them for peaceful laborers industriously loading cargo; and so they were—but it was a cargo of death. Before evening the last cask was stowed; and then followed other and stranger materials—tarred beams, stones, bars of iron, broken chains, fagots of wood and straw.

A strange freight, truly, but a freight of which every atom was soon to be terribly useful. As the sun dipped into the waveless sea the work ended. The very sails had been blackened, that they might give no warning to the enemy; the small boat at the stern had been scrutinized as men scrutinize the means on which their lives are about to depend; the long fuse had coiled itself into its place, and the fireship lay ready for her mission of destruction. Night came on, hot, stifling, breezeless, as if holding its breath for the great tragedy to come. Not a gleam of moonlight to break the gloomy sky—not a sound along the dark waters, upon which the deadliest carnage that they had ever witnessed was just about to begin.

Toward midnight a light breeze sprang up from the southwest, and the watchful Greeks gave the expected signal. One by one the fifteen men whom he had chosen—men who, like himself, regarded this venture as quite an every-day matter—slid down noiselessly as shadows, into their floating mine; and Elphinstone was just stretching his hand to grasp the tiller, when he felt it touch a warm, smooth face and curly head which he was at no loss to recognize.

"Confound you, you young dog!" growled he, in a would-be harsh voice, "what on earth do you want here? We've no room for babies in this job; so just you jump out and back to bed."

"What, stay behind and lose all the fun, daddy?" said the little hero, imploringly. "Why, you said you'd take me into a fight with you some day, you know; and we mayn't have another such chance for ever so long! Give me no bigger licking as you like to-morrow, but let me see the fun to-night!"

"Let him go, your honor—let him go," whispered the gray-headed boatswain, who had been with his leader through every battle of the war. "We ought to be all together in such a job as this 'ere; and if so be as we do lose the number of our mess (*i. e.*, get killed) we can't go afore God A'mighty in better fashion than with one o' his little ones to lead us!"

The quaint pathos of the veteran's entreaty prevailed; the boy, with a half-stifled whoop of delight, seated himself beside his father; and the phantom ship glided away silently as a spectre over the gloomy sea, straight down upon the doomed fleet.

On board the Russian flagship every light had been extinguished except the poop lantern, the faint light of which dimly showed an anxious group leaning over the side and exchanging eager whispers: "Can you see her?"

"No; but she must be close upon them by this time. Evidently *they* haven't seen her, or they wouldn't be so quiet."

"Will he do it, do you think?"

"He will do it if he can; but—"

That sentence was never finished. There came a crash as if the earth were rent asunder—a shock that lashed the smooth water into foam, and shook the whole surrounding shore—a blinding glare in which the tall masts of the Turkish squadron and the dark hills behind and the wide, desolate sea, and the white faces of the gazing Russians, all stood out terribly distinct for one moment, and then were blotted out as if they had never been. But that darkness was soon broken; a light began to shine through the gloom—not like the sudden flash of the explosion, but a broad, bright glare, waxing broader and fiercer with every moment.

CAPTAIN ELPHINSTONE'S FIRESHIP.—"ERECT IN THE STERN OF THE BOAT, WAVING HIS STRAW HAT AND SHOUTING LIKE A MADMAN, APPEARED THE FIGURE OF A BOY."

One by one the black, shadowy masses looming along the inner side of the bay started into ghastly prominence against a background of their own flames. Every mast, every spar stood out as if red-hot, and the huge ribs of the burning hulls glowed like the bars of a furnace.

Ship after ship crackled and roared into a sea of fire, and every crash of the falling rigging was answered by a sullen plunge in the water below, which seemed to run blood beneath the crimson glare, while the crowded ranks of faces that lined every bulwark in the Russian fleet looked wan and ghastly in the unearthly splendor; and far up against the sky, among the crests of the surrounding ridges, appeared the spectral figures of white-clad Mohammedan peasants, looking down in terror upon the destruction of their master's "invincible" fleet.

But when the great Turkish flagship itself exploded with a crash like the loudest thunder, hurling its blazing fragments far and wide over the sea, the Russians, silent hitherto from sheer amazement, broke out in one universal shout of triumph, though amid that sky-rending uproar it sounded faint and feeble as the cry of a child.

"But where is the brave Englishman?" cried Captain Spiridoff. "Heaven grant that no harm have come to him."

"Not a bit," shouted a gray-haired quartermaster, waving his hat joyously. "Yonder comes his boat, and he and all his men are—Holy St. Nicholas! what's that?"

Erect in the stern of the boat against the flaming background, waving his straw hat and shouting like a madman, appeared the figure of a boy—a little curly-haired lad, with round, smooth face, which, seen in the glare of the conflagration, might have passed for one of Raphael's cherubs flying heavenward in a blaze of glory.

"It's the captain's son," quoth Spiridoff. "See what men they are now—these Westerns! Their very children are as keen for a fight as themselves!"

"Well done, the little fellow!" cried Orloff, with a momentary impulse of honest admiration—for no man is wholly bad. "I'll hang my own chain round his neck when he comes in. He has well deserved it." Five minutes later the gallant band were safe on board, and the rough seamen were dancing and shouting like schoolboys round the little hero, who took it all as coolly as if he had done nothing worth mentioning.

But neither he nor any of those who applauded him that night could foresee the yet nobler achievement which those waters were to witness twenty-eight years later, when another boy, then unborn, was to stand by the side of his father in a far more terrible battle, and die with him at last in the explosion that destroyed the flower of the French navy—leaving behind, as an imperishable memory, the story of "Casablanca."

CAPTAIN ELPHINSTONE'S FIRESHIP.—"'I CONFOUND YOU, YOU YOUNG IMP!' GROWLED CAPTAIN ELPHINSTONE, IN A WOULD-BE HARSH VOICE, 'WHAT ON EARTH DO YOU WANT HERE?'"

CAPTAIN ELPHINSTONE'S FIRESHIP.—"FIVE MINUTES LATER THE GALLANT BAND WERE SAFE ON BOARD, THE ROUGH SEAMEN DANCING AND SHOUTING ROUND THE LITTLE HERO."

CATCHING A TARTAR.

OF all the inhabitants of the air, none moves on such noiseless wings as the night-loving, hoarse-voiced owl. Its downy plumage makes no resistance to the atmosphere, but yielding, like the wave, to every breath that blows, enables the bird to glide like a sprite over the starlit landscape. The owl's approach is unheraided, and its victims are snatched up or lifted from the earth without a moment's warning, and borne away in triumph.

Nearly every portion of the earth can claim the owl as an inhabitant. Amidst the gloomy recesses of the polar regions, beyond the farthest point that the foot of civilized man has ever trod, robed in a dress of white that rivals in purity the snow around, the great snowy owl dwells, a king even amidst the monarchs of the air. Feathered to the bill and claws, no freezing blast has any effect on him; and amidst the twilight of an Arctic Winter his vision is as clear and far-reaching as is the eagle's beneath the rays of a tropical sun. Fearless and confident in his own powers, he roams over the bleak fields of his northern home, or follows the bears in their search for the walrus or seal, and shares their banquet with them.

Besides the familiar birds of this family, there are also the ground, or burrowing owls, which live in holes in the earth, and do not shun the light of day. In these strange subterraneous dwellings the bird lives in company with the marmot (commonly known as the prairie-dog) and the rattlesnake. It is doubtful if the latter is a welcome sharer of the abode, and it may be imagined that at times it makes a meal of one or other of the occupants of the burrow. These little ground-owls are frequently seen sitting at the mouths of their dwellings, into which, however, they disappear with astonishing rapidity at the first note of alarm. Colonies of the three creatures here named, so amenable and antagonistic to each other, are frequently met with on the prairies of the Western World.

In southern lands the echoes of the night are often aroused by the guttural notes of this nocturnal wanderer. As the sun declines below the horizon, from his place in the hollow of some trees, where he has been sleeping away the day, the owl begins to open wide his great eyes, and to bestir himself preparatory to the evening's campaign. After a few quick snaps of his mandibles, to prove to himself that they are in good working order, and a few lazy shakes of his plumage, the bird, apparently still only half awake, comes forth to the entrance of his house.

Many are the queer contortions he makes as he stretches his neck about and peers around on every side, as though, like some near-sighted person, he stood in need of his eye-glasses, while occasionally he places his bill in the centre of his back, at the apparent imminent risk of dislocating his neck, and takes a good look into the burrow he has just quitted. As the night comes on, and the darkness deepens, he becomes more lively, and, as if disliking the silence of the grand old woods, shrieks forth an unearthly cry, or a few deep notes, as if undergoing some singularly pleasant and then stares around him, evidently highly satisfied with what he considers a very musical and meritorious performance.

And now the moon has risen, tipping the waving leaves, and pencilling the rugged trunks of the forest trees with many a silver line, while the stars crowd in myriads the tropical sky, and twinkle like diamonds in its clear vault. All nature is hushed to repose, and no sound disturbs the silence that reigns around, save the quiet rustling of the lofty branches as they move gently to the breeze. This is the moment which our friend considers propitious to sally forth, and after a few feints at starting, and a few elevations of his pinions, he quietly glides away.

Noiselessly he sails among the trees, mindful of every object beneath him, his wonderfully-constructed eyes, that cannot bear the light of day, permitting him to see, as through a telescope, into the darkness of the forest. He swiftly threads the leafy lanes, avoiding, as if by magic, the innumerable twigs and branches that intersect his flight, and is watchful at the same time for anything that may serve to break his long fast since the previous night.

A little weasel, likewise bent on an evening's marauding amidst some oft-visited poultry-yard, is quickly spied by the owl, and, faster than the eye can follow, the swoop is made, and the nimble quadruped is a prisoner in the sharp claws of its winged foe. Rising again, the owl mounts above the trees, and pursues his way toward a ruined tower that has served the purpose of a dining-room to him many times before.

The bats wing their erratic flight around, and, with many a curious evolution, attend to him as he has been sleeping away the day, the owl begins to open wide his great eyes, and to bestir himself preparatory to the evening's campaign. After a few quick snaps of his mandibles, to prove to himself that they are in good working order, and a few lazy shakes of his plumage, the bird, apparently still only half awake, comes forth to the entrance of his house.

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he goes. But suddenly, even in midair, his strokes become feeble, a single harsh note is uttered, the wings then cease to beat, and become fixed, and the upward course changes to a downward one; and, with outstretched claws and stiffened body, the bird falls headlong to the earth, a long line of escaped feathers floating lightly away from him as he descends. The reason of this catastrophe is soon told.

When struck by the owl the weasel was seized by the back, and as it was borne aloft, the supple creature, like all its tribe, was not inclined to yield without a struggle, and therefore, twisting itself around, even as it was carried along, it seized the bird by the throat, and in midair slew him with its sharp teeth.

No sooner was the earth reached than, springing lightly away, the nimble animal disappeared; and the inanimate body of the bird alone remained to remind us how often in the world the cunning of an apparently feeble creature has proved more than a match for the strength of the most powerful.

HOW A YOUNG MAN BECAME A GOOD FARMER.

"GOOD faith! you ought to be happy, if you are not," cried Harry Vane. "A fellow like you—young, handsome, jolly, and——"

"And blue as indigo," groaned Will Betterton.

"Blue—you—twenty-five, loved by all the girls, envied by all the boys, and an heir into the bargain."

"Heir to what, please tell me?" asked Will, dolefully.

"Why, bless us, man, you don't mean to tell me that your old uncle, whom everybody knows was rich as a king and close as a pawnbroker, and who left you all his property——"

"That's the trouble, Harry," interrupted Will. "He left it all, but between you and me, as old friends, just tell me where it all is? Look at this antique of a house, its ribs not strong enough to hold it up. Look at that five-acre farm. Are these a fortune for a man of my habits?"

As he spoke, he threw open the rear door of the house, and revealed an open field extending back from the small and rather dilapidated mansion.

"Look at this furniture."

"But hang it all, man!" exclaimed Harry, "there is some confounded mystery here. We all know that your uncle, Tom Betterton, was a miserly old skinflint—don't get angry now—and that he had cash in plenty. What bank do misers keep their money in? Have you searched all the old stockings and looked up the chimney?"

"Yes, and opened every pill-box, and haven't found a maravedi. People are expecting me to flourish like a green bay-tree. And on what, pray? On air? It's a decidedly unpleasant situation. I am not going to blow the fact that I am as poor as a church mouse. And, what's more, I've been spoiled by high living. I'm good for nothing in this world but to sing, dance, crack a joke, or bet on a horse-race."

He looked so, in fact.

Handsome and stylish, but with the plain marks of dissipation on his face, and with a delicacy of look as if he was pursuing a course that led to consumption.

Evidently Will Betterton needed the stimulus of hard work, and a purpose in life beyond the spending of money and drinking of wine. "Oh, pshaw! the money's somewhere, for he had it," ejaculated Harry. "You've hunted like an ill-trained hound, with your nose in the air. Let me take a look round. Bet you five to one that I unearth something. What is this creaky old desk?"

"It was my uncle's writing-desk," replied Will.

"You will find nothing there. I have thoroughly examined it."

"But I haven't," returned Harry, pulling out drawers, boxes and papers with rapid haste. "No secret hiding-places? These old desks are famous that way. What is this, now?" rapping with his fingers. "I fancied so," he continued, as a square piece of wood fell, displaying a narrow receptacle in the rear end of one of the pigeon-holes of the desk.

A close-rolled paper revealed itself, which Will nervously seized.

"It takes me for a sleuth-hound," laughed Harry. "What is it, Will? An inventory of money and where hidden?"

"Something that way, I admit," confessed Will, in a peculiar voice, in which excitement mingled. "Read it, and see what you think of it."

Harry quickly ran his eyes over the document, whistling with an air of surprise as he did so.

"Well, this is rich. Decidedly!" he ejaculated. "If the old chap hasn't buried his money all over the five-acre field, I'm a sinner! And bids you dig for it if you want it. What now, Will?"

"It will never do to let anybody else know of it, or we should have half the town digging here at night," said Will, thoughtfully. "But look at me. Ain't I a figure to dig up five acres? And what would everybody think of me? I don't know what in the sun to do. I must have money, but I don't want the whole town to go swearing that Will Betterton has gone crazy."

"And you not daring to set them right," remarked Harry.

"No, no; that secret must be kept."

"It's sound with me," replied Harry. "They can think what they please for all they learn from me."

In fact, people did think there was something odd with Will Betterton.

He acted very strangely for the next few days.

"Is he in mourning for his uncle?" asked one.

"Trouble about investing his money, may be," suggested another.

"Not he, while there's a billiard-table," declared a third.

"The fellow is in love, I'll swear to that," was the decided suggestion of a fourth.

Harry Vane smiled covertly to himself, but said nothing.

"Well," he asked Will, after a week or two, "have you made up your mind? What are you going to do?"

"I am going to dig," replied Will.

And dig he did, with an energy that blistered his hands, and doubled up his backbone before he had been an hour at the work.

But on the morrow he was again at the spade. And on the morrow again.

The news of this strange freak ran like wildfire through the town.

The destiny Will Betterton, who had never done five minutes' useful labor in his life, digging away like a farm-hand.

Every one must see for himself if this strange story was true.

Sure enough! there he was, digging and perspiring; his coat off, his sleeves rolled up, his hair dishevelled; and, as some averred, with a wild look in his eyes.

Laughter flashed off from him like light from a mirror.

There was a shaking of heads among his former cronies, and some significantly touched their foreheads and cited cases they had known of strange aberration of mind.

It must not be imagined that Will did not feel all this.

But there was an energy and determination in the idle fellow, now that he was aroused.

"They would think worse of me if I were to acknowledge myself a pauper," he muttered.

"That was a queer ring the spade gave," said Mr. Jones, reflectively. It sounded like the chink of money."

"Just so," replied Will, with a hollow laugh. "The stones in this field have a very metallic ring. When will you sow the peas?"

"To-morrow, I think."

Will was not long in digging up that stone.

Nor was he long in reaching the house with the canvas bag that contained it.

But we cannot say that he was highly pleased with the find.

A hundred dollars!

Why, he could not have been hired to do the work he had performed for ten times the amount.

But there is nothing wonderfully alluring in uncertainty.

The next find might be more.

Will dug on.

And the old man followed him with his planting.

Will had yielded in a weak moment, and there was now no escape.

Peas were followed by beans; beans by ingyons and early cabbages, as Mr. Jones called them.

New finds came.

But they did not increase in amount.

In short, within three weeks the whole field had been thoroughly dug up, and, to Will's bitter disappointment, it had panned out the miserable sum of five hundred dollars.

One bag of a hundred dollars only to the acre!

He might well be discouraged.

He had yet to discover that it had panned him out more than this.

It had panned out such an appetite as he had not known for ten years; and free breathing powers that were a luxury to him; and a muscular energy and taste for hard work which he would have thought impossible; and some slight distaste for the frivolous character of his past life.

This soon passed away, however, and the five hundred dollars with it, while dissipation brought back Will's former weakness of appetite, and that old unpleasant cough.

"Then I thought tell you, Will Betterton," said the old man, in a more decided tone than was usual with him, "that you dug up more than gold in the field yonder. You dug up a man and buried a dissipated miser, who was fast drowning his soul in a wine cup. And I can tell ye more. It was just this your cute old uncle wanted to fetch about. Five hundred dollars weren't all his fortune by a 'bag full.'"

"Where is the rest of it, then?" asked Will.

"It is in safe hands, Will Betterton, for it's in mine, and them hands is ridiculous good at holding on. I wasn't to give it till ye was fit to have it. Mebbe I can trust you now, for ye've grown rich in more than money. You're rich in health and in honest labor, and in respectable intentions."

"I don't know but what you are right," returned Will, after a pause. "See here, Harry, were you in this plot?"

"I had an idea where to find that paper."

"Well, if ever there was a rascally scheme! How much did you say that amount was?"

"Oh, a trifle of thirty thousand, or thereabouts."

"I forgive you both," cried Will, in a lively tone. "To tell the truth, I don't believe I care half so much for the money as I would have done six months ago. I have had a useful lesson, and that is that there is something else in this world worth living for besides the pleasure of spending money."

Will was thoroughly cured of his dissipated habits.

And neighbor Jones never ceased chuckling to the day of his death over the success of Tom Betterton's plot.

THE LEGEND OF WESTMINSTER ABBEY.

THE beauty of the architecture of Westminster Abbey transcends that of any other building in England. Yet it is not this alone that lends the place its interest. Through century after century England has buried her great within its walls, and here no kings and abbots, statesmen, soldiers, poets, actors, philanthropists, artists, musicians, side by side, until the Abbey has become the wonderfully beautiful burial-place of the nation's distinguished men; and thus, when we think of it, reverence overpowers admiration, and we forget the splendor of the building in thoughts of those whose everlasting rest it overshadows. But it is not of the Abbey in its present condition of which we would speak, but of its origin and of the legend connected with its foundation.

According to a monk named Fiete, the spot on which Westminster Abbey now stands was once a "terrible place," so overrun with thorns that it was called Thorn's Island; and here stood the Temple of Apollo, which Sebert, King of the Saxons, overthrew in the beginning of the seventh century. Having disembolished the temple he began to build upon its site a Christian temple.

Mellitus was then bishop of London, and he highly approved of the good work of Sebert's, and, when it was quite completed, promised to dedicate it with great splendor. The king was happy; his workmen did their best. At last the building was finished, and on a certain evening Mellitus was to come from London for the purpose of performing the ceremony.

However, before the day arrived, a fisherman sat one night fishing on the banks of the Thames, when suddenly there appeared before him, as though fallen from heaven, a most majestic figure, who thus addressed him:

"Take thy boat and row me across the river."

Trembling, the man obeyed.

On the opposite bank St. Peter commanded him to wait until he came, and entered the church.

The fisherman knelt on the bank. He dared not stir, for suddenly every window of the church was ablaze with the most unearthly light, and by it the poor man saw troops of angels passing to and fro, while the most wonderful music reached his ears.

All this lasted for a long while; then the lights went out, the music faded away, and the majestic figure once more stood beside the fisherman, and bade him row him across the river again. By this time the fisherman was nearly dead with fear, but his strange passenger calmed him with these words:

"Have no dread of me, I am St. Peter. My mission was to dedicate yonder church; this I have done. Cast thy net again when I have gone; the draught of fish will be miraculous. On next day breaks take the largest to the Bishop Mellitus, and tell him what thou hast seen. Hereafter let one-tenth of all the fish caught here belong to the church, and no fisherman shall ever want."

The fisherman did so; and the bishop, hurrying to the church, found there every token of the fact that the dedication had been performed by a heavenly priesthood. There were marks of extinguished tapers and of the chrism; therefore he refused to rededicate the pile, but simply celebrated Mass there.

Whatever the origin of this tradition, it is an historical fact that for many centuries Westminster Abbey claimed one-tenth of all the fish caught within certain limits on the Thames, and the fishermen admitted the claim under the belief that St. Peter had promised to prosper them so long as they paid this tithe.

From this building arose the splendid pile now known as Westminster Abbey. Succeeding kings have built and added to it for many centuries.—Edward the Confessor being impelled to his portion of the work by what he considered a miraculous dream.

CAPTAIN ELPHINSTONE'S FIRESHIP.—"THERE CAME A CRASH AS IF THE EARTH WERE RENT ASUNDER—A BLINDING GLARE, IN WHICH THE TALL MASTS OF THE TURKISH SQUADRON, THE WIDE, DESOLATE SEA, AND THE WHITE FACES OF THE GAZING RUSSIANS, ALL STOOD OUT TERRIBLY DISTINCT."

"So, so, neighbor Betterton. Tryin' your young hand at farmin', eh?" came a voice at his elbow.

Will turned, by no means pleased.

There stood old-fashioned gossip, Bently Jones, his uncle's former crony.

"Yes," said Will, shortly.

"But why don't thee plow? Diggin's slow work?"

"It's sound work, anyhow," answered Will. "I have been less than a week at it, and I've got more than an acre done."

"But your hands aren't fit for the spade."

"Oh, blisters will heal," replied Will, blowing his burning fingers.

"It has its good p'ints, to be sure," continued the old man, with a grating laugh. "You're waterin' it as you go, with the sweat of your brow."

Will dashed the beaded perspiration from his forehead.

He wished the tiresome old man would go before his patience was quite exhausted.

"What crop be you goin' to put in, neighbor?" asked the gossip. "Now I think 'arly peas would be good for this part. And if ye've a mind, now—I've some prime seed—if ye've a mind to let me put it in, and go halves——"

"Faith, maybe I had better," said Will to himself, "for I haven't touched a penny of the buried money in this acre. Maybe a crop of peas is all I am likely to get."

"What say you, neighbor?" asked the old man, in an anxious tone.

"I wish somebody would smother this old bore," was Will's mental rejoinder, as he struck the spade again vigorously into the earth.

There was a peculiar chink, the first significant sound which had struck his ear since he commenced digging.

"Yes, yes," cried Will, dropping the spade, and turning suddenly upon the old man. "Yes, put the peas in, of course. We'll go shares." His voice was quite excited. "And now won't you excuse me, Mr. Jones? I can do nothing when anybody is talking to me."

But all this time that he was sowing wild oats, neighbor Jones was sowing and growing.

Will was strangely affected at the sight of the flourishing field, as he came home thoroughly discouraged from the planting of his last dollar in a round of dissipation.

"All growing well, neighbor Butterton," said old Mr. Jones. "It's a purty field, if I do say it. And it'd do me good if you'd lend me a hand now and then."

Will's insane fancy came back—so his friends said.

But he said to himself that there was something decidedly pleasant in worting among the growing plants, even if it was a little wearisome.

It helped his appetite, and did more for that abominable cough than a gallon of the bitterest medicine would have done.

Will Betterton was cut by his fashionable acquaintances.

By the time the season was over, and the crops gathered and sold, Will had gained a taste for hard work and business which he had never deemed possible, and a bodily vigor and an appetite that made him feel like a new man.

And he was not even the dregs of that troublesome cough left.

And we must say that there was not left one of those Summer friends who had formerly followed him like a pestilence.

They sat together one October evening, he and Harry Vane and old Mr. Jones, looking out over the field.

"How much cash did you find, Will?" Harry suddenly asked.

Will looked round in surprise.

"You will have to wait till Farmer Jones and I make out our accounts," he answered.

"I've a notion ye've got this much, neighbor Betterton," remarked the old man. "You've got a liking for honest work, and ye've got cured of the unwholesome kind of life ye was leading."

"Faith, I have that," exclaimed Will, decidedly. "No more dwadling for me."

THE MYSTIC THREE:

SHOWING WHAT HAPPENED TO THREE BOYS WHO BELIEVED ALL THEY READ.

By PIERCE CUTTING.

CHAPTER LXXIX.

A BAD CASE OF NIGHTMARE.

THE supper was resumed, and as every one was in high good humor, it went off with success.

After the tables were cleared away the Mystic Three were lounging about on the deck, when the gong was beaten again.

People began to stream back into the cabin at once.

"Hello, hello!" observed Sim; "this is queer."

"What is?" demanded his comrades.

"Why, I've heard of its being a short time between drinks out here."

"Well?"

"But it strikes me now that it's a short time between meals."

"What do you mean?"

"You heard the gong, didn't you?"

"Pshaw! it can't be another supper."

"What is it, then?"

"Ask, and find out."

And Hack put the question to the first passenger they met.

"It's the concert," replied the man.

"What concert?"

"The one the darkey crew always gives. It's a regular thing on these river boats after supper."

"Then we must take it in."

And they adjourned to the cabin.

The concert turned out to be a regular minstrel entertainment.

The performers were the negro barber, waiters, and other colored hands belonging to the boat.

The programme consisted of old-time plantation melodies, breakdowns, and the like, and the music was furnished by a fiddle, a banjo, piccolo, tambourine and bones.

By the time it was finished and a collection had been made up for the benefit of the performers, it was bedtime.

The boat was about to make a landing at a river town just then, however, so the Mystic Three went on deck to observe that performance before turning in.

There was a long whistle, followed by two short ones, to announce to the people ashore the approach of the boat.

In a couple of minutes more the town was reached.

It was a small place, perched on a bluff, with a rude wharf for the boat to land at.

As the steamer ran alongside a gang-plank was thrown out, and a couple of negroes appeared, armed with blazing pine-knots.

By the light of these the others rolled the cargo ashore in a brisk and expeditious fashion.

The Devastators managed to be in the way of everybody for some time.

At last, in jumping back to escape being rolled under a barrel of pork, Simeon Walsingham Pugsley fell against the pigsty and broke one side of it down.

There was a loud squeal, a rush of feet, and then a heavy plunge.

"By gum!" yelled the captain, "there's that fifteen-dollar hog overboard. Chase him, some of you!"

Half a dozen negroes plunged into the water without hesitation.

But the porker had the best of them.

His course could be traced by his snout, which shone in the moonlight, but he was too far ahead, and the current was too swift for him to be overtaken.

The captain, after swearing at everybody within reach, ordered the boat to start again.

"The biggest hog on board gone," he grumbled.

"Dern it all, it's too bad."

At his juncture his eyes lighted on Mr. Jim Staggers, who was loitering around.

"I forgot," he said.

"Forgot what?" asked Mr. Staggers.

"I said the biggest hog on board was gone."

"Well, ain't he?"

"You're here yet, I believe."

A ferocious scowl crossed the ruffian's face.

"I am here yet," he muttered, "and you'll wish I wasn't before you get rid of me."

And he slouched away.

The Devastators, after witnessing the termination of this scene, concluded to go to bed.

They had been provided with a stateroom with two berths and a lounge in it.

After undressing they turned in and were soon asleep.

The boat plowed on, and hour passed after hour.

It was drawing toward morning when Simeon Walsingham Pugsley was awakened by a fearful sound.

It seemed to him like the awful breathing of some one being strangled.

Or of a man whose throat had been cut.

He occupied the upper berth, and starting up, he listened.

The sound came from the next stateroom.

Again and again it was repeated, with blood-chilling distinctness.

Now and then a choking voice would be audible, gurgling forth indistinct words like:

"Mercy! Forgive me! Oh, heaven!"

And so on.

"Great snakes, Hack!" whispered Sim, "do you hear that?"

Hack, who was sleeping on the lounge, rolled over and repeated, drowsily: "Hear what?"

"That noise."

"I hear the noise you're making."

"Nonsense! Wake up and listen."

At this moment the dreadful sound caught Hack's ears, and he sat up with a start.

"Jakes alive!" he exclaimed.

"I wish you were dead!" growled Gid, from the lower berth. "Can't you let a fellow sleep, anyhow?"

"You're a nice one, ain't you?" observed his companions.

"Because I want to sleep!"

"Yes."

"Well, I certainly don't see anything out of the way in that."

"But I do."

"What?"

"I have my opinion of any one who wants to sleep while somebody's being murdered in the next room."

"Shiver my toplights! what do you mean?"

"Listen and find out."

"O-o-o-h! mercy! mercy! mercy!" gurgled the voice.

Gideon Goble's hair stood on end.

"It's some one being murdered!" he exclaimed.

"It sounds like it."

"Boys, I'll bet a dollar."

"On what?"

"That that Jim Staggers is cutting somebody's throat in the next room."

"By crickey! I never thought of that."

"He's just the chap to do it."

"And it is him, sure as you're born."

"Then there's only one thing for us to do."

"What?"

"Can't you guess?"

"Poll him."

"Just so. We've beaten him so far, haven't we?"

"Every time."

"Then he mustn't triumph now."

"Never."

"Not even hardly ever."

"Follow me."

"We follow."

And, armed each with a revolver, the Mystic Three stepped out into the cabin.

The saloon was dimly lighted and deserted.

A faint light showed through the slats in the door of the next stateroom.

The groans, too, were more clearly audible.

"Try the door," whispered Sim.

"I have," rejoined Hack.

"Is it locked?"

"Tight as a drum."

"Then we must force it."

"All right."

"Stand all together now."

"Ay, ay, sir."

"When I count three, let go."

"Very well."

"One! two! three!"

At the word three the Devastators hurled themselves simultaneously forward.

The stateroom door, under the impact of their sturdy bodies, gave way with a crash.

Then door and Devastators tumbled in a heap in the stateroom.

The noise woke the whole cabin, of course.

Some one screamed fire, and in a moment the saloon was filled with a panic-stricken crowd.

The noise proceeding from the stateroom with the broken door attracted attention in that direction.

Inside stood a man with a revolver in one hand, while with the other he shook a pudgy boy of fifteen as if he intended to shake him to pieces.

"What do ye mean, ye pesky young varmint?" he roared; "wakin' me up at this time o' night, burstin' into the room like a pack of burglars?"

"Let me go!" gasped the pudgy youth.

"I'll let ye go to jail—all three of ye."

"It will serve us right," said Hackaliah Snick, angrily.

"I know it will," retorted the man. "You're a pack of rascally young thieves."

"We're a pack of fools for trying to save you."

"To save me?"

"Yes, you."

"What from?"

"From being murdered."

"Murdered?"

"Yes, sir."

"And who was going to murder me?"

"I don't know and I don't care."

"S'pose you explain, young chap?"

"All I've got to say is we heard you groaning, and if we hadn't come in when we did you'd be a dead man."

A momentary silence followed this declaration.

Then the man let Gid go, and rolled back on his berth in a fit of uncontrollable laughter.

He laughed till he was black in the face and could scarcely talk.

Then recovering himself a little, he sat up and said, huskily:

"Well, you air a dapper set o' young gophers, ain't you?"

"Why?" demanded Sim, angrily.

"Oh, nothin'. Only take my advice."

"Well?"

"And before you set out to save anybody from being murdered, learn one thing."

"What's that?"

"The difference between a man being butchered."

"Well?"

"And one with the nightmare."

A thunder of laughter filled the cabin at this explanation.

And under cover of it the discomfited Devastators sneaked into their stateroom and locked and bolted the door.

That operation performed, they looked at one another for an instant.

Then, of one accord, they said together, disgustedly: "Sold again!"

A whole dime novel could not have meant more. Or said what it meant more plainly.

CHAPTER LXXX.

THE TRUTHFUL PILOT.

FOR reasons which will be readily apparent the Mystic Three did not confer a boon on the public by showing themselves again that night.

In fact, like Sir Joseph Porter, they sought the seclusion that the cabin grants, or, rather, such as they could find by resolutely remaining in their stateroom.

They were by no means proud of their late exploit.

In point of fact, they were not anxious to have it noised abroad any more than they could help.

Consequently, even when morning dawned, and the stir and bustle about the boat indicated that the passengers had emerged from their berths and were making all haste to secure their breakfast, the Devastators still lingered in their stateroom.

Had not the pangs of hunger driven them forth, they would very likely have remained there all day.

But, being blessed with extremely healthy appetites, nine o'clock found them unable to stand it any longer.

And, accordingly, they came forth, looking as sheepish as a lot of detected mutton-thieves.

Fortunately, the lower cabin, where the dining saloon was located, was almost entirely deserted.

The passengers had long since finished breakfast, and it was only by bribing a waiter that they succeeded in getting at length a cold and uninviting mess of the remnants of the meal.

Seated at one end of the table, engaged in stowing away a huge, sizzling, red-hot steak and accompaniments, was a bronzed, weather-beaten old fellow, whom they recognized as a man they had seen the night previous in the pilot-house.

He looked at the trio with an air of great curiosity, and, finally, having finished his breakfast, came over and sat down near them with the remark:

"Ar you them young galoots that kicked up that tarnation row last night?"

"Respected sir," responded Hackalish, "your eyes have not deceived you."

"You are gazing upon those identical philanthropists," said Sim, proudly.

"Those noble and self-sacrificing beings," added Gid.

"Well, may I be snagged if you aint a curiosity!" said the pilot, looking from one to another of the trio.

"We are generally considered to be the greatest curiosity in these parts," remarked Hack.

"Why so?"

"Because we cannot tell a lie."

"Not one of you?"

"Not one of us."

"Nor all together?"

"Individually and collectively, sir, we are marvels of veracity," replied Sim.

"And what mout that mean?"

"That we believe in telling the truth."

"The whole truth?"

"And nothing but the truth."

And the Mystic Three smiled a joint smile of conscious virtue.

"Well," remarked the pilot, after staring at them for a minute, and cutting off from a huge plug a liberal supply of tobacco, "I 'low me on a sand-bar if you ain't a new specie in this yere kentry."

"We're proud of your good opinion," replied Hack, while Sim endeavored to look dignified, and Gid grew at least an inch taller as he heard the pilot's last remark.

"Come up in the texas, boys," continued the pilot, rising, "and you kin look at the kentry, and at the same time tell me what brought you out here, and whar you are goin'."

The Mystic Three accepted this invitation with alacrity.

It offered them a means of escape from the jibes and jeers which they knew they might expect as soon as they showed themselves on deck.

So they followed the pilot.

Mounting first a couple of stairways, and then a narrow ladder, they soon found themselves in the texas, a sort of platform raised even above the hurricane deck, and on which stood the pilot-house.

Short as was the transit from the lower cabin to this lofty perch, they did not escape unnoticed.

A yell of derision greeted them as they passed through the main cabin, and the passengers crowded forward to gaze at the gallant trio who had so bravely striven to rescue their neighbor from being murdered—by a nightmare.

"Here they is," shouted a big man wearing a buffalo coat—"the preservers of our lives! hooray!"

And he made a futile effort to perform a double-shuffle.

It resulted in his losing his balance, however, and capsizing one of the waiters who was passing at that moment, bearing a tray of glasses containing something more potent than water for a party of card-players in a corner near by.

Picking himself up he immediately began to pummel the waiter, and during the confusion then created the Devastators managed to escape to the upper deck.

The pilot led the way to the pilot-house—a roomy structure with large glass windows on all sides—and invited them to enter.

The other pilot was on duty, and stood silent and almost motionless at the wheel, only stirring for a moment when the frequent windings of the channel made it necessary for him to change the course of the boat.

The panorama before them was a most interesting one, and for once the Mystic Three were disposed to cease talking and use their eyes to their fullest extent.

But their friend, the pilot, insisted upon hearing their story, and after some persuasion they began.

He reeled off a string of adventures which fairly made the pilot's hair stand on end.

Hack and Gid threw in a few corroborative yarns from time to time, and the pilot punctuated the narrative with exclamations of "thunder," "walk me on a reel, is that so?" and the like.

When Sim finished, merely because he had reached the limit of his inventive power, the pilot drew a long breath.

"Well," he exclaimed, "stave me with a sawyer if I ain't glad."

"What are you glad of?" inquired Sim, anxiously.

"That you can't say of you tell a lie."

"Why so?"

"Because I must think that you'd stretched the truth the least mite in the world; but, of course, if you can't tell a lie, that settles it."

"We'd scorn to deceive you," responded Hack.

"Yes, I s'pose you would, but I reckon George Washington would turn over in his grave if he could hear you."

"You think so?"

"Sartainly I do."

"You never tell anything but the truth, I suppose?" said Sim, sardonically.

"Never in my born days. Why, they call me Truthful George, all along the rivers, clean to Orleans."

"They do?"

"Yes, these forty years."

"And have you been piloting all that time?"

"In course I have."

"You must have seen some strange things in that time."

"Heaps on 'em."

"What sort?"

"All sorts you kin think of."

"Do tell?"

"And a good many you can't."

"Well, I should just say so."

"What were the funniest you ever saw, for instance?"

"The real funniest, as far as I kin recollect," said the pilot, meditatively, "was that there time the old *Nonsuch* run went ashore for a drink."

"What?"

"Went ashore for a drink."

"A steamboat went ashore for a drink?"

"It wasn't exakly the boat wanted the drink—that is to say, it was the captain."

"But how did it happen?"

"Well, you see, there was a little tavern used to stand by the bluff down Chickasaw Bend way, which it were kep' by a friend of Captain Tom."

"Yes."

"And the captain he were used to stop every time he passed to take a drink with his chum."

"Just so."

"Well, one day along comes a freshet, and it floats the house back nigh onto a quarter of a mile. An' all in front of it was mud deep enough to drownd an elephant. So when we got there Captain Tom seen himself choused out of his drink."

"Why didn't he walk to the tavern?"

"Ain't I told you the mud was deep enough to drownd an elephant?"

"So you did."

"So he couldn't walk. But he swore he'd have that drink all the same. Now what d'ye think he does?"

"I'm sure we don't know."

"Why, he p'nts the *Nancy Jane* head on for land."

"Yes."

"And he starts the engine full speed, with four niggers hangin' to the safety-valve. She made one jump for shore, and when she fetched ground she just walked right right along on her paddles like a circus wagon, never stoppin' till she got to the door."

"What happened then?"

"Why, Captain Tom got his drink and walked her back ag'in."

The Mystic Three gazed at one another, pallid with awe.

They had heard of lies, but this beat any they had dreamed of, even.

As for Truthful George, he only looked out of the window and whistled "Hold the Fort" to slow time.

It was some minutes before the stupefied Devastators recovered themselves sufficiently to speak.

Then, in order to change the subject, Sim said:

"There's lots of alligators down the Mississippi, ain't there?"

"Loads," returned Truthful George. "But not so many as before they took to shootin' them for their hide and taller."

"You've seen a plenty, though, I s'pose?"

"I have; but I don't want to tell you about 'em, boys."

"Why not?"

"Cause you'd think I was lyin' to ye."

"We couldn't."

"Not after that other story."

"Ye couldn't now, really?"

"Certainly not."

"Well, I'm glad to hear that. The fack is, boys, I kin cheat at cards, drink whisky and chaw, but I can't lie. It's something I never do."

"Of course not."

"Now, the honest truth is, I've counted 'leven hundred alligators to the mile, from Vicksburg clean down to Orleans."

"You don't say so!"

"An' I've counted eleven thousand nine hundred and ninety-nine o' 'em on one sand-bar."

"Do tell?"

"It looks big to tell, but there was a minister aboard, and he checked 'em off as I called out."

"We haven't the least doubt of it; but didn't it make him tired?"

"He died three days afterward."

"What of?"

"Some said it was whisky, but I've got my opinion."

"So have we."

"Why, in them days, boys, the wheels of the boat used to kill an average of forty-nine alligators to the mile, they was so numerous."

"Gracious sakes!"

"True as gospel. I used to feel real sorry for the cus-ed brutes, 'cause they'd cry out most like human bein's. But many as we killed we hurt more."

"I should think so."

"One captain I was with used to carry a thousan' bottles of liniment every trip to throw over to the wounded ones."

"He did?"

"True as you live, he did. I don't expeck I'll ever see such another real kind, Christian man."

"I should think not."

"Why, the alligators got to know that boat same as a nigger baby, and they'd swim out and rub their tails agin her side and purr like cats, an' look up an' try to smile."

"The alligators would?"

"Solemn truth. Why, once when we was aground on a bar with the opposition boat just behind, them alligators gathered round an' got under our stern an' just give her a grand push an' shoved her over. It looks like a big story, but I wouldn't lie for all the money you could put on this boat."

"Certainly not."

"Our engines give out once."

"They did?"

"Yes, an' the alligators just took hold of a towline an' hauled us forty-five mile up stream to Natchez."

"Well, I never!"

"Them was great days. When the news that Captain Tom was dead got along, every alligator in the river dobbed his left ear with mud as a sign of mournin', an' lots of 'em pined away an' died. They're great insecks, alligators is, I tell ye, boys."

"They're amphibious, ain't they?" asked Sim.

"Amphibious!" repeated Truthful George. "Well, I should smile. Why, boys, they're amphibious as blazes! You just throw 'em a hog, an' see how they'll git away with it."

CHAPTER LXXXI.

MORE SOLID FACTS.

THE Mystic Three felt so completely paralyzed by the veracious narrative with which Truthful George had regaled them, that they were speechless for as much as ten minutes.

Then they simultaneously took off their hats and presented them to that individual.

So far from being offended by the silent sarcasm of this proceeding, the worthy pilot was highly delighted.

He gave vent to a hoarse laugh that would have frightened a buffalo bull, and shook them all three by the hand with much heartiness.

"I like you, young fellers," he said, cordially. "You're just my persimmons, fur you kin give and take a joke—but say, war that say truth at all in them yarns you've just been tellin' me?"

"About as much as there is in your affecting tale of the sympathetic alligators," replied Sim, grinning.

"Wal, I kin tell you, boss, if you ever chance to run foul of the tail of a alligator, you'll think it's tolinble affecting, I reckon."

And Truthful George burst into another roar of laughter at his attempted joke.

The Mystic Three, not wishing to seem impolite, followed his example.

"By gosh," exclaimed the pilot, suddenly, after consulting a huge hunting cased watch, which he extracted with some difficulty from his fob-pocket, "time's up, as sure as there's snakes in Virginny; it's my trick, old man."

And he laid one hand on the wheel.

The other pilot, who had not spoken a word since they entered the wheel-house, now relinquished the wheel, saying, as he did so:

"My beauty's 'a that blasted pine in the bluff that by Benson's cut off, and that stack of chimbleys wher Widder Torpey's house what's been down used to stand, went by south; that's only quarter less three on Sick Skillet shoals, on good know."

And without another word he left the pilot-house.

"Ain't much of a talker, he ain't," remarked the friend, as he let the big wheel spin around and the boat swung with the current and pointed her head to go round a bend in the river; "don't never say nothin', 'cept like what you heard him just now."

"Was he always that way?" inquired Hack.

"Wal, no; when he first come on the *Warrior* he was right pert at tellin' stories 'bout the time he was 'a-pilotin' up Red River."

"And he never tells them any more?"

"Not for this four year an' better."

"And you can't account for it, I suppose?" said Sim.

"Wal, no, not exactly, unless——"

"Unless what?"

"'Niess he's sorter jealous o' me."

"That's it, I'll bet a cooky," exclaimed Hack.

"And no wonder," remarked Sim.

"He couldn't help it," added Gid.

"Do you really think so?" inquired Truthful George, with a gratified air.

"Sure as shooting!"

"Mebbe you're right; I've kinder o' thought he was sort of discouraged like."

"If he isn't, he ought to be," remarked Hack.

"Yes," said Gid, "that alligator story alone is enough to paralyze a yellow mule."

Truthful George listened to this encomium with a smile of conscious rectitude.

The compliment pleased him more than any other that could have been offered him.

"I never struck nuthin' like it before," he said. "But that's what's the matter, sure as shootin'. There war one story 'bout them Red River boats he used to tell, though, that I reckon war true."

"Indeed!"

"Yes."

"What was it?"

"It war 'bout old Captin Holmes. The captain wanted a new boat once, count of the old one havin' concluded to take a dive under a snag one night; and he wanted a light-draft one."

"Indeed!"

"A werry light-draft one, as it were."

"What for?"

"Well, the river in them days was so thick with fishes an' alligators that a heavy-draft war no earthly count, so the captain he goes to one ship-builder an' he says, says he:

"'I kin make ye a boat as 'll travel into two foot o' water.'

"'Too deep,' says Captin Holmes.

"'An' he goes to another. That other he says, says he:

"'I'll build ye a wagon as will drag through a foot o' water.'

"'Too deep,' says the captin.

"'An' he goes to another. That chap he says, says he:

"'Captin, I'll give ye a craft that 'll travel on a heavy dew, I will.'

"Then the captin got real mad, an' he war a powerful bad one when he was mad. He just raired around, cussin fit to bust, and at last he yells:

"'You fellers calls yourselves builders, does ye? Wal, I don't. When you kin build a boat as 'll float on the sweat of an ice-pitcher send in yer specifications. I'm yer daisy.'"

"Did he ever get his boat?" asked Gid, as Truthful George stopped and heaved a long sigh.

"No."

"Couldn't build one, eh?"

"Well, I wouldn't go so far as to say that. But he pegged out."

"Which?"

"Went up. Was busted."

"Lost all his money?"

"No; but the biler of a boat he was on exploded, an' up he went."

And Truthful George made an elaborate pretence of wiping a tear which was not there from his eye.

"I suppose you've been blown up?" ventured Sim.

"You bet!" replied Truthful George.

"Often?"

"One hundred and ninety-nine times."

"Why it isn't two hundred."

"Why so?"

"Because it would sound nicer to have an even number."

"Well, it might. But if you think I'm goin' to tell a lie for one blow up you want to be mistaken, that's all."

"What does it feel like to be blown up?"

"Sort of queer, you might call it."

"Very exciting, isn't it?"

"That depends on the style of the blow up."

"Indeed!"

"Yes. You see, there ain't much fun in a blow-up on a light boat."

"Isn't there?"

"Not get a bust on a heavy one, with loads of cargo sailin' around, and its just lively. The last time I went up war on the *Rattlesnake*, an' she war heavy."

"How high did you go?"

"A mile an' two furlongs."

"What?"

"A mile an' two furlongs."

"How on earth did you measure it?"

"I didn't measure it on earth. I was sailin' up, I tell ye."

"Well, how did you get it, anyhow?"

By this time Truthful George had struck on the right lie.

"I grabbed the barometer when I started," he said, "and kept my eye on the meet'ry. I like to be 'sherit in all things, even when it gives me a heap o' trouble. There was a very funny thing happened to me on one blow up I had."

"What was that?"

"It was on the *Billy Bessely*."

"Yes."

"We was racin' the opposition, and the furnaces was so hot the fire-room walls took fire."

"They must 'a been hot."

"White hot. Well, boys, we was pushed hard, so what does the engineer do but ram in seventeen bar'is of tar. You k'n jedge what followed."

"What?"

"Well, the bilers melted clean away, and then kim the most tremendous blow-up I ever see."

"You went up?"

"Went up! Why, I just sailed. But bein' a little heavy, ye see, the lighter ones went up quicker. I was just rising into the second mile, p'raisin' the smoke-stack to middy myself, when I see a little thing creep a-squain' down.

"'That there looks like a farmilliar form,' says I.

"'Oh, George!' yells him.

"'My sons, Bin Jim!' says I."

"Which Bin Jim?"

"My brother, I hadn't seen for four year."

"Did he speak to you?"

"He just shook hands as he passed.

"'I'll wait for ye below, George,' says he.

"'All right,' says I.

"Well, I don't know. You see, I landed in the next country an' was arrested for trespassin'. I had too much to do to git off to bother about my brother."

[To be continued.]

"The Mystic Three" was commenced in No. 477.

THE THIEVES WHO COULDN'T HELP SNEEZING.

MANY years ago, when each tree now past their prime were about as large as elderly gentlemen's walking-sticks, there lived in Wessex a yeoman's son, whose name was Hubert. He was about fourteen years of age, and was as remarkable for his candor and lightness of heart as for his personal courage, of which, indeed, he was a little vain.

One cold Christmas Eve his father, having no other help at hand, sent him on an important errand to a small town several miles from home. He trusted on horseback, and was detained by the business till the hour of ten o'clock.

At last, however, it was completed; he returned to the inn, the horse was saddled, and he started on his way. His journey homeward lay through the Vale of Blushmore, a fertile but somewhat lonely district with heavy clay roads and crooked lanes. In those days, too, a great part of it was thickly wooded.

It must have been about nine o'clock when, riding along amid the overhanging trees upon his stout-legged cob Jerry, and singing a Christmas carol, to be in harmony with the season, Hubert fancied he heard a noise among the boughs.

This recalled to his mind that the spot he was traversing bore an evil name. Men had been waylaid there. He looked at Jerry, and wished he had been of any other color than light gray; for on the account the docile animal's form was visible even here in the dense shade.

"What do I care?" he said, aloud, after a few minutes of reflection. "Jerry's legs are too nimble to allow any highwayman to come near me."

"Ha, ha, indeed!" was said, in a deep voice; and the next moment a man darted from the thicket on his left hand, and another from a tree-trunk a few yards ahead. Hubert's bridle was seized, he was pulled from his horse, and although he struck out with all his might, as a brave boy would naturally do, he was overpowered. His arms were tied behind him, his legs were bound tightly together, and he was thrown into the ditch. The robbers, whose faces he could now dimly perceive to be artificially blackened, at once departed, leading off the horse.

As soon as Hubert had a little recovered himself, he found that by great exertion he was able to extricate his arms from the cord; but, in spite of every endeavor, his arms remained bound as fast as before. All, therefore, that he could do was to rise to his feet and proceed on his way with his arms behind him, and trust to chance for getting them unfastened.

He knew that it would be impossible to reach home on foot that night, and in such a condition; but he walked on.

Owing to the confusion which this attack caused in his brain, he lost his way, and would have been inclined to lie down and rest until morning among the dead leaves, had he not known the danger of sleeping without wrappers in a frost so severe.

So he wandered further onward, his arms wrung and numbed by the cord which pinioned him, and his heart aching for the loss of poor Jerry, who never had been known to kick, or bite, or show a single vicious habit.

He was not a little glad when he discerned through the trees a distant light. Toward this he made his way, and presently found himself in front of a large mansion with flanking wings, gables and towers, the battlements and chimneys showing their shapes against the stars.

All was silent; but the door stood wide open, it being from this door that the light shone which had attracted him. On entering he found himself in a vast apartment arranged as a dining-hall, and brilliantly illumined. The walls were covered with a great deal of dark wainscoting, formed into molded panels, carvings, closet-doors, and the usual fittings of a house of that kind. But what drew his attention most was the large table in the midst of the hall, upon which was spread a sumptuous supper, as yet untouched. Chairs were placed around, and it appeared as if something had occurred to interrupt the meal just at the time when all were ready to begin.

Even had Hubert been so inclined, he could not have eaten in his helpless state, unless by dipping his mouth into the dishes, like a pig or cow. He wished first to obtain assistance; and was about to penetrate further into the house for that purpose when he heard hasty footsteps in the porch and the words, "Be quick!" uttered in the deep voice which had resulted him when he was dragged from his horse.

There was only just time for him to dart under the table before three men entered the dining-hall. Peeping from beneath the hanging edges of the table-cloth, he perceived that their faces, too, were blackened, which also once removed say remaining features, he may have felt that these were the same thieves.

"Now, then," said the first—the man with the deep voice—"let us hide ourselves. They will all be back again in a minute. That was a good trick to get them out of the house—eh?"

"Excellently," said the third.

"But they will soon find out that it was a false alarm. Come, where shall we hide? There must be some place we can stay in for a few hours. Ah! till all are in bed and asleep. Ah! I have it. Come this way! I have learnt that the further room is not opened once in a twelvemonth; it will suit our purpose exactly."

The speaker advanced into a corridor which led from the hall. Creeping a little further forward, Hubert could discern that the closet stood at the end, facing the dining-hall. The thieves entered it and closed the door.

Scarcely breathing, Hubert glided forward, to learn a little more of their intentions, if possible; and, coming close, he could hear the robbers whispering about the different rooms where the jewels, plate, and other valuables of the house were kept, which they plainly meant to steal.

They had not been long in hiding when a gay chattering of ladies and gentlemen was audible on the terrace without.

Hubert felt that it would not do to be caught prowling about the house, unless he wished to be taken for a robber himself; and he slipped softly back to the hall, out at the door, and stood in a dark corner of the porch, where he could see everything without being himself seen. In a moment or two a whole troop of personages came gliding past him into the house.

There were an elderly gentleman and lady, eight or nine young ladies, as many young men, besides half-a-dozen men-servants and maids. The mansion had apparently been quite emptied of its occupants.

"Now, children and young people, we will resume our meal," said the old gentleman. "What the noise could have been I cannot understand. I never felt so certain in my life that there was a person being murdered outside my door."

Then the ladies began saying how frightened they had been, and how they had expected an adventure, and how it had ended in nothing, after all.

"Wait a while," said Hubert to himself. "You'll have adventure enough by-and-by, ladies."

It appeared that the young men and women were married sons and daughters of the old couple, who had come that day to spend Christmas with their parents.

The door was then closed, Hubert being left outside in the porch. He thought this a proper moment for asking their assistance; and, since he was unable to knock with his hands, began boldly to kick the door.

"Hullo! what disturbance are you making here?" said a footman, who opened it; and, seizing Hubert by the shoulder, he pulled him into the dining-hall.

"Here's a strange boy I have found making a noise in the porch, Sir Simon."

Everybody turned.

"Bring him forward," said Sir Simon, the old gentleman before mentioned. "What were you doing there, my boy?"

"Why, his arms are tied!" said one of the ladies.

"Poor fellow!" said another.

Hubert began at once to explain that he had been waylaid on his journey home, robbed of his horse, and mercilessly left in this condition by the thieves.

"Only think of it!" exclaimed Sir Simon.

"That's a likely story," said one of the gentlemen-guests, incredulously.

"Doubtful, eh?" asked Sir Simon.

"Perhaps he's a robber himself," suggested a lady.

"There is a curiously wild, wicked look about him, certainly, now that I examine him closely," said the old mother.

Hubert blushed with shame; and instead of continuing his story, and relating that robbers were concealed in the house, he doggedly held his tongue, and half-resolved to let them find out their danger for themselves.

"Well, untie him," said Sir Simon. "Come, since it is Christmas Eve, we'll treat him well. Here, my lad; sit down in that empty seat at the bottom of the table, and make as good a meal as you can. When you have had your fill, we will listen to more particulars of your story."

The feast then proceeded, and Hubert, now at liberty, was not at all sorry to join in.

The more they sat and drank, the merrier did the company become; the wine flowed freely, the logs flared up the chimney, the ladies laughed at the gentlemen's stories—in short, all went as noisily and as happily as a Christmas gathering in old times possibly could do.

Hubert, in spite of his hurt feelings at their doubts of his honesty, could not help being warmed both in mind and in body by the good cheer, the scene, and the example of hilarity set by his neighbors.

At last he laughed as heartily at their stories and repartees as the old baronet, Sir Simon, himself.

When the meal was almost over, one of the sons, who had drunk a little too much wine, after the manner of men in that century, said to Hubert:

"Well, my boy, how are you? Can you take a pinch of snuff?"

He held out one of the snuff-boxes which were then becoming common among young and old throughout the country.

"Thank you," said Hubert, accepting a pinch.

"Tell the ladies who you are, what you are made of, and what you can do," the young man continued, slapping Hubert upon the shoulder.

"Certainly," said our hero, drawing himself up, and thinking it best to put a bold face on the matter, "I am a traveling magician."

"Indeed!"

"What shall we hear next?"

"Can you call up spirits from the vasty deep, young wizard?"

"I can conjure up a tempest in a cupboard," Hubert replied.

"Ha, ha!" said the old baronet, pleasantly, rubbing his hands. "We must see this performance. Girls, don't go away; here's something to be seen."

"Not dangerous, I hope," said the old lady.

Hubert rose from the table.

"Hand me your snuff-box, please," he said to the young man who had made free with him. "And now," he continued, "without the least noise, follow me. If any of you speak it will break the spell."

They promised obedience. He entered the corridor, and, taking off his shoes, went on tiptoe to the closet-door, the guests advancing in a silent group at a little distance behind him.

Hubert next placed a stool in front of the door, and, by standing upon it, was tall enough to reach to the top. He then, just as noiselessly, poured all the snuff from the box along the upper edge of the door, and, with a few short puffs of breath, blew the snuff through the chink into the interior of the closet. He held up his finger to the assembly, that they might be silent.

"Dear me, what's that?" said the old lady, after a minute or two had elapsed.

A suppressed sneeze had come from inside the closet.

Hubert held up his finger again.

"How very singular," whispered Sir Simon. "This is most interesting."

Hubert took advantage of the moment to gently slide the bolt of the closet-door into its place.

"More snuff," he said, calmly.

"More snuff," said Sir Simon.

Two or three gentlemen passed their boxes, and the contents were blown in at the top of the closet. Another sneeze, not quite so well suppressed as the first, was heard; then another, which seemed to say that it would not be suppressed under any circumstances whatever. At length there arose a perfect storm of sneezes.

"Excellent! excellent for one so young!" said Sir Simon. "I am much interested in this trick of throwing the voice—called, I believe, ventriloquism."

"More snuff," said Hubert.

"More snuff," said Sir Simon.

Sir Simon's men brought a large jar of the best scented Scotch.

Hubert once more charged the upper chink of the closet, and blew the snuff into the interior, as before. Again he charged, and again emptying the whole contents of the jar. The tumult of sneezes became really extraordinary to listen to; there was no cessation. It was like wind, rain and sea battling in a hurricane.

"I believe there are men inside, and that it is no trick at all!" exclaimed Sir Simon, the truth flashing on him.

"There are," said Hubert. "They are come to rob the house, and they are the same who stole my horse."

The sneezes changed to spasmodic groans. One of the thieves, hearing Hubert's voice, cried:

"Oh, mercy, mercy! Let us out of this!"

"Where's my horse?" said Hubert.

"Tied to the tree in the hollow behind Short's Gibbet. Mercy! mercy! let us out, or we shall die of suffocation!"

All the Christmas guests now perceived that this was no longer sport, but serious earnest.

Guns and cudgels were procured, all the men-servants were called in and arranged in position outside the closet.

At a signal Hubert withdrew the bolt and stood on the defensive. But the three robbers, far from attacking them, were found crouching in the corner, grasping for breath.

They made no resistance, and, being pinioned, were placed in an out-house till the morning.

Hubert now gave the remainder of his story to the assembled company, and was profusely thanked for the services he had rendered.

Sir Simon pressed him to stay over night, and accept the use of the best bedroom the house afford, which had been occupied by Queen Elizabeth and King Charles successively when on their visits to this part of the country.

But Hubert declined, being anxious to find his horse Jerry, and to test the truth of the robbers' statements concerning him.

Several of the guests accompanied Hubert to the spot behind the gibbet alluded to by the thieves as where Jerry was hidden.

When they reached the knoll and looked over, behold! there the horse stood, uninjured and quite unconcerned.

At sight of Hubert he neighed joyfully, and nothing could exceed Hubert's gladness at finding him.

He mounted, wished his friends good-night, and cantered off in the direction they pointed out, as his nearest way, reaching home safely about four o'clock in the morning.

CONRAD THE GREEK, AND THE ENCHANTRESS OF SCIO.

CHAPTER I.

CONRAD'S NUPTIALS AND THE CORSAIR'S DOOM.

IT is scarcely more than a century ago since Grecian mothers hushed their refractory children to obedience and quietude by merely uttering in one awful word—"Turk."

That short epithet expressed even to infantile minds something horrible.

Not a town, not a village in all Greece, but would tell many a tale of fire and steel, torture and rapine, and all inflicted by the merciless Turks.

The little seacoast town of Epidaurus alone had not been often subject to their attacks, it's immunity therefrom being owing to the valor and patriotism of one of its sons, Conrad Navarino by name, who had filled the other young men of the place with much of his own bold and adventurous spirit, so that turning their harmless fishing-skiffs into gunboats, they bid a stern defiance to all strange vessels that should come too near unto their shores.

Not only this, but ere long they actually turned a war of defense into one of retaliation, and Conrad grew in a few short months to be the terror of the Ægean Sea, whereon no Turkish merchantman, unless she was under strong convoy, dared exalt the crescent and the star with impunity.

So by his bravery the once poor fisher-youth not only protected his native town from fire and sword, but also grew rich on the booty that he snatched from the foe.

Wealth satisfying him no more than it does others, he began to look about him for one who should share it with him—in other words, for a wife.

His heart was not long made captive by one who was as pure in mind as she was beautiful in face and person and humble in origin, for he gave his heart and offered his hand in honorable marriage to Nydia, the daughter of Nestor, the old blind net-maker.

So Conrad wooed, and ere long won the maiden's heart in return, and the day was presently named whereon she should give him her hand likewise.

A great many of Conrad's youthful friends and followers, when they heard of this, began to think that it would be quite the proper thing to get married on the same day and in the same church as their gallant captain and leader.

So there began a wholesale offering of hearts, and as the love of Grecian maidens is quickly won by deeds of valor, there were very few rejections, the result being that instead of only one marriage taking place in the little Church of St. George on the morning that Conrad Navarino had declared would be the happiest of his life, no less than twenty-five were to be celebrated, and a precious to do it all gave rise to.

No more of sea and fighting before the nuptials and the honeymoon were over; so the armed boats were drawn up high and dry upon the shore, and the patriots gave themselves up to merriment.

The happy day at last arrived, and Epidaurus kept high festival.

Flags fluttered from tower, parapet and balcony; flowers strewed the streets; church and convent bell tinkled merrily, and all went merry as—such occasions should.

At an early hour the nuptials were celebrated in the pretty little Greek church, and then the newly-married, in company with their relatives and friends, went down to the shore of a beautiful cove with a shining beach that looked as though its smooth sand was gold-dust.

Music and minstrelsy were there, with cooling wines and luscious fruits, and neither sea, sky, mountains, sunshine—no, nor even the brilliantly-hued flowers that perfumed the air in thousands and tens of thousands, could compare in beauty with the human loveliness of the fair young Grecian wives; whilst, like a sun amidst stars, Nydia, the daughter of Nestor, and now the bride of Conrad Navarino, outshone them all with the greater effulgence of her glory.

THE MYSTIC THREE.—"SIMEON WALSINGHAM PUGSLEY FELL AGAINST THE FIGGY AND BROKE ONE SIDE OF IT DOWN. THERE WAS A LOUD SQUEAL, A RUSH OF FEET, AND THEN A HEAVY PLUNGE."—SEE PAGE 374.

Who'd have thought, to hear the merry rippling laughter of the maidens, and the more boisterous mirth of the men, that danger, sorrow and anguish were near?

The tide rippled gently in on the beach, and a curving horn of rock hid the open sea from view, apparently turning the little azure bay into a land-locked lake of inexpressible peace and loveliness. Suddenly, however, one of the company starts, and in his nervous trepidation overturns a wine-cup, the ruby liquid gurgling out like blood over the white cloth.

He whispers to his neighbors on the right and left of him, the murmur passes round, and in an instant, as it were, all eyes are fixed on a fair enough sight, and yet to each one of them a vision of awful significance.

Over the low ridge of rugged, lichen-covered rock that shuts in the peaceful bay from the open sea they behold—what?

The tall masts, square yards and snow-white canvas of what they knew must be a large war-ship. And now, as they gaze, up to the main-peak is run a ball, which, expanding to the breeze, discloses a flag blood-red in hue, and charged with the crescent and the star.

It needs but that ill-omened vision to cause each one to spring to his feet, whilst the cheeks of the blushing brides grow white. "The Turk!" The Turk!" gasps each to each, with panting chest and bated breath. "The flagship of Admiral Mehemet Ali, by the gods of Greece!" said Conrad; "and our gunboats high and dry and useless on the beach!"

As though in direct reply to this agonized wail, for his gallant boat was as dear to him as a second bride could have been, a cloud of black smoke, in which lambent tongues of flame were intermingled, rose in the distance, and the crackling of burning timber could be distinctly heard.

Then quickly there ensued a roar, so deep, so terrible, so appalling that it seemed as though earth and heaven were being rent asunder; but every one knew, as well by the sound as from the piercing shrieks and rattling down of stones that followed it, that the heavy thunder was that of big guns, and that the Turkish line-of-battle ship had poured one of her tremendous broadsides into the town.

"All is lost. If we would save our brides from the slave-markets of Stamboul and the harem of the Turks, we must fly to the mountains," exclaimed one.

"But we have mothers and sisters as well as brides—what of them?" asked another.

"Oh, they are in full flight already, depend on it," said a third, with a despairing oath.

"It not, we must pass through the town, and we can pick them up on the way," remarked Conrad, bitterly.

Then he added:

"They have stolen a march on us, and there must have been a traitor in our midst or they would never have heard of this opportunity. If we escape we must discover him, and he must perish."

Having delivered himself thus, Conrad turned to retreat, helping his trembling bride along and trying his best to keep up her spirits and soothe her terrors.

When the whole party had emerged from the orange orchard and got through the vine-trellised lanes almost as far as the outskirts of the town, they found their further passage barred, however, by a large party of the foe, all armed to the teeth.

"By Allah! hither comes the fairest spoil that ever ship was laden with. We have been rightly informed, my sons, and the virgin brides of Epidaurus will be a noble offering to our lord the sultan," cried a turbaned and black-bearded pasha, who was evidently in command of this party; and having thus delivered himself, he waved his curved scimitar and incited his men to the attack.

Nydia threw herself in front of Conrad, in order to shield him from danger with her fair form, when she perceived muskets leveled and swords drawn, but the corsair swung her round, and drawing his own weapon, sternly confronted the foe.

"Fire!" roared he, "if you will, for the daughters of Greece have no more fear of death than have her sons. Be assured they will rather welcome your bullets than submit to that unholy passion which you profane by the name of love."

"Ha, ha, ha! listen to the giaours! Does the unclean dog imagine that Allah ever formed houris for the delectation of such as him?" sneered the pasha. "Down with them all, and hack and hue and spare not, for 'tis the Corsair Conrad and his crew whom we have all so much reason to hate; but be mindful not to injure the maidens, for each of them seems worth her weight in gold."

Thus at the same time encouraged and cautioned the Turkish marines, for to that branch of the naval force did they belong, dashed upon the Greeks, and a terrible hand-to-hand conflict ensued between them.

The Greeks were armed only with their short hitless swords and knives, for they had never expected to have had this work cut out for them on their bridal day; whilst the Turks, besides their daggers and scimitars, had muskets and pistols, which they knew only too well how to use with deadly effect.

The Greeks, however, fought like lions; for they knew that they must either fight or perish, in all probability both; and it was touching to witness the manner in which their beautiful brides endeavored to shield them from Turkish lead and steel, even by the interposition of their own bodies and limbs.

Some got a hurt by misadventure now and then, but the Turkish marines were careful that this should happen as rarely as possible, and by dint of their overwhelming numbers the little party of Greeks were at last all cut down; Conrad, owing to his ferocity, vigor and splendid swordsmanship, being the very last to fall, and then falling across a heap of the slain Turks.

"Conrad, *zoe mou*, your sword, in order that I may plunge it into my heart and perish with you," wailed forth Nydia, as she bent over her husband, and with trembling and eager fingers sought to possess herself of his weapon.

But the crushing head-blow 'neath which he had gone down, besides half stunning him, had so confused his intellect that he neither heard her words nor was he conscious that it was the darling of his heart who was preferring death with him to luxury and homage in the seraglio of the sultan.

Fancying that it was a Turk who was trying to wrest his weapon from him, he clutched it with all his remaining strength, determined to die with his battle-brand in his hand; and thus Nydia, unable to sacrifice herself on the altar of her love, was the next moment pounced upon by two Moslems and borne shrieking away.

That cry of mental anguish went straight to Conrad's heart, enabling him for a moment to throw off his lethargy, and even raise himself upon one elbow.

He saw the exquisite young creature writhing in the grasp of her captors, her face every whit as white as the rounded limbs upon which their clutch was fastened, and felt, oh, horror! how powerless he was to save her.

Perhaps she guessed his agonized thoughts, for she called out in silvery accents that reached him plainly:

"I will not forget that I am a Greek, a Christian, and your wife, though they kill me!"

And then another blow, this time from the butt end of a musket, stretched Conrad once more, quite insensible, on the grass, where he lay as one dead; happily, perhaps, since, had he not looked so much like a corpse, he would most likely have been speedily converted into one.

An hour later, after having converted Epidaurus into a blood-soaked ruin, and destroyed even the very orchards and vineyards that surrounded it, the Turks betook themselves once more to their boats, and, with their lovely female captives and much booty, rowed back to their stately line-of-battle ship out in the bay.

* * * * *

Hour succeeded hour, and still Conrad lay where he had fallen without either sense or motion.

Morning was succeeded by afternoon, and afternoon by evening, but it was not until the cold refreshing dews of night began to fall that he at last opened his eyes and betrayed signs of life that was still in him.

The night-air, as it grew rawer and colder, seemed to have indeed almost a miraculous effect on him, for before very long he was able, not only to raise his head and look around, but also, after an effort or two, to struggle to his feet.

Passing his hand across his brow, the occurrences of the morning gradually came back unto him, and then the moonlight revealed the fact that the spot where he stood was thickly covered with the dead bodies of the Turks, thinly mingled with those of his own brave comrades, every one of whom had perished in the awful melée.

From this holocaust of slain his gaze slowly wandered to where Epidaurus had stood, but in that direction naught met his gaze but a wall or two, just perceptible through thick wreaths of dun-colored smoke, that seemed to be lighted up now and then with a luminosity as of flame coming from their rear.

But suddenly he heard the sounds of music.

The strains seemed to come stealing gently across the water, and gazing involuntarily in the direction of the sound, his eyes rested on the top-masts and upper-yards and spars of the mighty war-vessel that had brought all this slaughter, sorrow and desolation upon him and his.

At the sight Conrad seemed as though imbued with a new strength.

He felt that he must see the hull of this ship, which now held captive within it one who was more dear to him than life, riches, or even glory.

He staggered down to the shore and he clambered across the horn-extending masses of rock that separated the little cove wherein the pinnace had been held from the larger bay of Epidaurus.

There he sank down from sheer exhaustion on the yellow strand, but though he could not rise he could yet see.

He could from the spot where he lay see the blackened ruins of the town, the wrecked vineyards and orange orchards, the few charred timbers which were all that remained of his gallant little fleet of gunboats, and, about a mile out on the moonlit waters of the bay, the mighty marine monster whose guns and whose crew had perpetrated all the mischief.

Her huge hull rose up out of the waters like a castle, her masts seemed to reach into the skies, her ports were all lighted up, and through her stern windows Conrad could see the flashing of many lights, whilst to add to all this it was unmistakably from her that the strains of joyful music came sounding like a paean of victory.

Conrad rose again to his feet.

Such a sight and such sounds were enough to give strength unto the dead.

He folded his arms across his heaving breast, and whilst scowling at the Turkish line-of-battle ship, he unconsciously hissed between his tightly clinched teeth:

"I would sell my soul to the very spirit of evil, would he show me how, alone and unaided, I might sink that vaunting monster and every soul aboard her beneath the waves."

Scarcely had the words escaped him when a hollow voice that seemed to issue from out the air, said:

"Conrad, it is well. Go, seek the Enchantress of Scio!"

CHAPTER II.

THE MALACHITE CAVE AND ITS OCCUPANT.

NOW the Enchantress of Scio was a beautiful and supernatural being, who never appeared save unto those who had done their country some great service, and, consequently, it was none but the bravest of Greece's sons who had ever seen her.

Her dwelling-place was said to be a cavern of the purest malachite that opened on to the shore of the island of Scio, far out in the blue Ægean sea.

Even from where he stood Conrad could see the outline of this rugged isle distinctly, as it slept like some huge floating marine monster on the breast of the moon-enslivered waters; but how could he hope to reach it in his present exhausted condition and with every boat that the town had possessed destroyed by the Turks!

As for his strength, it certainly seemed to be coming back to him in a most strange and altogether unaccountable manner, but even if he were a very Leander he could not by swimming hope to reach an island that was nine miles away and the currents all against him.

And yet what had not the mysterious voice that had clearly issued from out the ambient air bid him do?

He pondered on the words it had spoken.

"Conrad, it is well!"

Yes, sink or swim, he would certainly try his best to reach the isle and seek out the enchantress.

To resolve was with Conrad Navarino to execute, or, at all events, to attempt, and so not wasting another thought as to the danger of the proceeding, he, without even casting aside his doublet, belt, boots, cap, or dagger, walked into the sea until he was out of his depth, and then commenced to swim doggedly and resolutely toward the distant haven that he desired so much to reach.

He scarcely seemed to break the surface of the phosporescent waters as he clave them in his course.

THE THIEVES WHO COULDN'T HELP SNEEZING.—"WITH A FEW SHORT PUFFS OF BREATH HE BLEW THE SNUFF THROUGH THE CHINK INTO THE INTERIOR OF THE CLOSET."—SEE PAGE 375.

and they were so clear that all the treasures of the great deep were revealed unto his sight.

Here a coral rock arose, bright and white, glistening in the moon's rays, and so near, apparently, to the surface that it seemed he must of necessity graze it in passing it.

Then a dark and seemingly bottomless pit would yawn beneath him, and for a minute or more he would shrink and hold his breath in fear, lest here the watery element would prove too weak to bear him up, and that he would be precipitated into the terrible abyss, far down which he could see the dim outline of some huge marine monsters, the like of which he had never beheld or heard of before.

It never occurred to Conrad to think how extraordinary it was that he felt no fatigue; nor did he notice the equally remarkable fact that he was cleaving the rippling waves with far more than a swimmer's usual speed and ease.

He was so taken up with the object that was carrying him to Scio, mingled with fears that even did he succeed in reaching the isle he might be unable to discover the abode of the enchantress, that his mind had no room for any other thought.

At last, and when, in fact, he had not been swimming for more than an hour at the most, the island loomed huge and close before him, and from a fissure in the black and lofty cliffs there gleamed a bright light.

Conrad did not remember ever having observed a human habitation about that spot, times enough though he had cruised close by in his gallant boat, and it suddenly struck him that it might proceed from the cave of the enchantress.

He made his way directly toward it, therefore, and on finding his feet touch ground, floundering through the shallow water and across the shell-strewn beach until he at last really reached the entrance of what appeared to be a spacious cavern.

The light that burned, surely clearer and purer than any mortal light could do, showed that the walls and overhanging roof of the cave were indeed formed of a rock of dazzling green color, and as he gazed upon them a voice of one singing, and oh! so sweetly, that the very forest-birds would surely have paused to listen, reached his ears from within, and caused him involuntarily to advance with quicker steps.

He stood spell-bound, however, as a few seconds later a most exquisite vision met his gaze.

It was that of a lovely maiden closely verging upon womanhood, who, seated upon a rock, was combing out her abundant masses of golden hair, whilst she regarded with an evidently well-pleased look the surpassing beauty of her face and form as it was reflected in a large oval mirror that stood at her side.

The light that shone upon and revealed the bewitching loveliness of the Enchantress of Scio, for Conrad could not for an instant doubt in whose presence he stood, came from a lamp of strange and grotesque form that hung suspended from the arched roof overhead.

This light it was which, even when he had beheld it from a distance, appeared so brilliant and vivid that he had taken it for an unearthly one.

As for the maiden who sat beneath it, he could not mistake her for one of earth's daughters, for she was too lovely; but even that loveliness did not cause Conrad to forget his mission; and advancing until he stood directly in front of her, he bowed his head low and said:

"Beautiful being, a voice coming from I know not where bade me seek thee and I am here."

"And now that thou hast seen me, speak the foremost desire of thy soul and it shall be thine."

"I would clasp again to my heart her to whom I was this morning wedded, and I would sail in the ship of the Capitan Pasha beneath the waves of the Ægean Sea with every soul whom she contains, there to decay and molder until the ocean gives up its dead."

"Look at me," said the beautiful denizen of the cavern; "say, kneel at my feet and regard me closely. Nay, tell me, is there nothing that thou wouldst sooner ask at my hands than vengeance on the Turk and to be reunited to thy earth-born bride?"

"What could I wish for more than those two things?" asked Conrad, innocently.

"What couldst thou wish for more?" echoed the enchantress, mockingly. "Am I not far more lovely than thy mortal bride, and have the power in return for a love freely given to render thee immortal? I possess a beauty that will never fade, but the good looks of thy Nydia may depart in a day. Canst thou hesitate between the eternal and the perishable?"

"Although earthly beauty fade, earthly love may be imperishable and constantly increasing," answered Conrad; "and if my Nydia's beauty leave her in this world, thy highest state of perfection has been already attained, and can never increase."

"Could beauty be any greater than mine in this world or the next?" demanded the enchantress, bending over Conrad until her perfumed hair of brightest gold mingled with his own short, black, glossy curls, whilst her breath, sweet as the odor of Spring violets, fanned his cheek, causing a strange, delicious languor. But Conrad shook the feeling off, and, rising to his feet, retreated to a safer distance from the bright being whose beauty he felt would otherwise ere long intoxicate him.

"I will not listen to thee," said he, "nor believe but that the bright habitants of heaven are lovelier far than even the spirits of earth, sea or air, of whom thou must be one or the other. Spirit, I will be true to my bride, to my faith, and to my God, so seek not to wean me from either." Scarcely had he finished speaking when the lovely face and form of the enchantress became blurred and indistinct, as though it were fading into space.

Presently it resumed form and substance again, though in the semblance not of a young and lovely maiden, but in that of an old hideous and wrinkled crone—the exact counterpart, in fact, of the bronze figure which hung from the vaulted roof and upheld the magic lamp.

"Thy fidelity to thy God, to thy faith, and to her whom that God and that faith bestowed on thee this morning have saved thee, Conrad Navarino, from the harm that otherwise it would have been in my power to work thee. The devil has lost a soul, and thou hast converted me into thy servant instead of his. Behold me in my usual form. I have but cast my outer skin, and yet see how hideous I am. I am still, however, the Enchantress of Scio and the protecting genius of Greece."

Here she paused, and her form seemed to expand and rise into monstrous proportions.

She took a wand up from the rocky floor, and waving it in the air, uttered some cabalistic words.

CONRAD THE GREEK AND THE ENCHANTRESS OF SCIO.—"ANOTHER BLOW, THIS TIME FROM THE BUTT END OF A MUSKET, STRETCHED CONRAD INSENSIBLE ON THE GRASS."—SEE PAGE 375.

Then, while her eyes flashed with a green and humorous light, she exclaimed:

"Ah, the spell already works. The ship of the Capitan Pasha has dragged her anchors and drifted on to a sand-bank. That will keep her in Greek waters until thou hast time to manufacture the machine that will send her to the bottom of them."

"The machine! What machine?" gasped Conrad.

"The fire-ship, if you like the name better," answered the enchantress. "Thou wilt have all the morrow for thy work, and a few planks nailed together and smeared with tar and resin will answer the purpose well enough. Launch thy craft from beneath the rock of Mimer at ten of the clock, and fear not but that I will work my spell in such a manner that thou and it shall be safely carried by the currents unperceived by the drowsy watch aboard beneath the huge outswelling hull of the Capitan Pasha's stately line-of-battle ship. A burning match and a steady hand will be then all that is needed, and as the flames mount from hull to mast and rigging, their light will guide thee back toward the shore. Say, now, hast thou sought the Enchantress of Scio for nothing?" And the sorceress gave vent to an ugly laugh.

"But Nydia and her beautiful companions?" gasped Conrad; "they will perish in the flames. Oh, tell me, is there no way of saving them?"

"Let them go and perfect their beauty in heaven, in that heaven where I shall never have place," answered the sibyl, sharply.

"If Nydia dies I will not live," exclaimed Conrad.

"Be it so. The means of death will not be wanting, and every son of Greece should be the master of his own fate;" and as she concluded the enchantress made a sign to Conrad to be gone.

He paused an instant, however, to tender her thanks for the services she had rendered.

"Speak not of it," she replied, with a chuckle. "'Twas the spirit of evil that sent thee hither, and I played boldly enough for thy soul in the manner in which mortal souls are in general most easily captured. For once I failed, and they who put implicit faith as thou dost in the working of Providence, and who believe that what seemingly is for the worst is for the best, have the power of producing good out of evil, and of compelling even the spirits of evil to do their bidding. Go, thou owest me no thanks, and I owe thee no love. Thankful only am I that, forced to do good, I do it for the welfare of Greece, and not for thy private benefit, for like unto thee and thy Nydia also, I myself was once a Greek."

And having thus delivered herself, the Enchantress of Scio drew herself up to her full height, and pointing her magic wand toward the distant mainland, intimated more clearly than before that she wished to be left alone.

Conrad bowed low, and submitted himself without further question to her will.

Quitting the malachite cavern, he once more committed himself to the soft embrace of the moon-deluged Ægean waves, and still sphorne and propelled by the same wondrous power that had borne him to the island, he was carried back across his native bay, and half an hour later stood on the very spot of beach where he had heard the voice say, "Go see the Enchantress of Scio."

CHAPTER III.

THE FATE OF THE TURKISH FLAG-SHIP.

TWENTY-FOUR hours have passed away, more than half of them by the Turks in the endeavor to get their huge vessel off the sand-bank on which she had drifted the preceding night, owing to the dragging of her anchors, and by Conrad in the construction of his fire-ship and the explosives with which she was to be freighted.

Conrad's craft was a mere tiny raft, smeared with highly inflammable materials, and having in its centre an iron vessel full of gunpowder, hand-grenades, and small rockets.

At ten of the clock the tide rose and floated it from off the spot whereon he had constructed it, and as it drifted away he got astride it, and only with a paddle wherewith to propel it in its proper course.

But his paddle was not needed, and the incantations of the Enchantress of Scio were evidently going mercily on, for the raft of death, as it might aptly have been called, floated directly toward the huge three-decker of the Turkish Capitan Pasha as though it was being towed in that direction by an invisible steam-tug, piloted by the devil in person.

There was no moonlight to-night.

Had there been, the Turkish look-out's could scarcely have failed to have seen the insignificant-looking but more formidable foe that was so rapidly approaching them; but heavy clouds obscured both moon and stars, and the flag-ship herself would have been invisible to Conrad but for the great lanterns gleaming from her bowsprit and fore-top-gallant masthead, and the perfect flood of light that streamed forth from her wide open cabin windows.

Through the gilded rails of her spacious stern gallery, Conrad could at length see the occupants of this cabin, or rather huge saloon, engaged in feasting and revelry at tables which were covered with luxurious viands and glessning treasure.

Amongst them, though evidently most unwilling guests, Conrad could perceive some of the fair Grecian brides who had been stolen from Epidaurus, though his gaze roved in vain o'er the illumined saloon in search of the beloved face of Nydia. Dark and determined grew his brow as his black craft shot nearer and nearer to the ship.

"Who goes there? What boat is that?" at last shouted some one or other in guttural Turkish, from the quarterdeck of the flagship.

But at that instant the fire-raft glided away from sight beneath the ship's out-bulging hull, and had a score brace of the sharpest eyes aboard peered curiously over her bulwarks or taffrail, they could no longer have perceived aught of Conrad or his craft.

Sharp ears might have heard the cautious click, click, click of a flint and steel, though, and then a splash in the water.

But the Turkish brass band suddenly striking up drowned those ominous sounds, and in another moment it was too late to have saved the doomed vessel, even had they been heard.

For, rapid as a flash of Summer lightning, the black raft burst into flame, the lambent, quivering tongues of fire at once greedily lapping the well-tarred, sun-dried sides of the Turkish line-of-battle ship.

They seized on her, they spread, they held her in their embrace, and then the iron canister that was bound to the centre of the death-raft exploding, up soared the hand-grenades and rockets aloft, to carry the

YOUNG PICKWICK'S SCHOOLDAYS.—"THERE WAS A LOUD CHEAK, AND THE BLOATED YOUTH FELL OVER ON HIS BACK."—SEE PAGE 378.

lesser myrmidons of the fire-king where they could grapple her spars and sails and huge black swinging yards.

And did Conrad falter in his determination, and swim back to that town where he would have been hailed by his brother Greeks as the most glorious hero and deserving patriot of his age?

He could easily have performed the feat, for he felt the strength and vigor of a demigod in his frame now.

But no; what was life, what was glory, unshared by Nydia?

He was ready to perish as long as he could die clasping her in his embrace.

On his approach to the flagship he had noticed a rope dangling from her lower stern-gallery to within a foot or two of the water, and swimming round her hull he caught hold of this and with little difficulty climbed aboard.

Entering the saloon, which a few minutes previously had been crowded with revelers (for the ship's being grounded on a soft sand-bank, in so calm a sea, caused neither officer nor crew much apprehension) he found it deserted, every one having rushed up on deck at the first shock.

The wax candles were still burning in the golden chandeliers: the fruit, the wine and the dainty confections still strewed the board, and all over the richly-carpeted floor were scattered pipes and musical instruments, turbans, gloves and weapons, just where they had been thrown in the first wild moment of panic when the fire-ship burst into flames.

Conrad Navarino picked up a scimitar and a brace of gold and jewel inlaid pistols, and thrusting the latter in his belt he, with the former bare in his hand, made his way up the companion-ladder to the deck.

There a most fearful and appalling sight met his gaze, for the flames were traversing the huge wooden fabric with lightning speed, and had already leaped up mast and rigging, until they had seized upon the very skysail yards.

The roar was deafening, and though officers and men ran hither and thither amidst the hell of flame and smoke, there was no approaching any of the boats on account of the great heat, far less an opportunity of lowering them.

But who are they whom Conrad suddenly perceives rushing to and fro, apparently as wildly panic-stricken as the followers of the prophet themselves?

They are the beautiful Grecian captives, the happy brides of yesterday!

Conrad feels a sharp pang at his heart, but his anger overpowers it.

"Do the daughters of Greece forget their glorious lineage so far as to exhibit craven fear in the presence of the Moslem?" he roared, in a voice of thunder; "come hither, unworthy children of a glorious parentage, and let Conrad try and teach you how to die!"

Almost ere he had finished speaking there was one answering cry—a cry uttered in a tone which, however shrill, was nevertheless one more of joy than of fear, and the next instant a female form came flying along the main deck, and springing lightly up the flight of steps that conducted to the lofty poop, threw herself into her lover's, or, rather, her husband's arms.

Tenderly, almost fiercely, he pressed her in his embrace, and rained a torrent of kisses upon her cheeks and brow.

"Nydia, then," said he, "you could not come to me, so I have come to thee. What God has joined together, it is not fitting that man, nor sea, nor flame either should put asunder, and if it is destined that we should not live together, at all events we can perish together."

"Conrad," replied Nydia, "death has no need of you. You have done a great and noble deed. Live, then, to reap its reward in the glory and honor that will be bestowed upon you by your fellow-men. Kiss me once more, and then farewell. I am not selfish enough to accept this great sacrifice."

"And I am not selfish enough to obey thee," answered Conrad.

All this while the flames were gaining a still stronger and more overwhelming mastery over the vessel.

And her crew were tearing about her decks like madmen, not knowing what they did.

Sometimes a blazing block or spar would fall crashing down and maim or kill two or three or more at a time, whilst others would tall down overcome by either the smoke or the heat.

In their agitation the Turks did not detect the presence amongst them of their destroyer, or no doubt they would have sprung upon and promptly slain him, feeling a fierce satisfaction in thus getting their vengeance.

But whoever has been aboard a ship on fire must know how impossible it is to distinguish anything clearly, and thus it was that Conrad escaped detection, until at last the encroaching flames forced officers and crew alike back, back, back, until they were absolutely driven back on to the quarter-deck, and then at last the discovery was made that a Greek was aboard, and that that Greek must have been the author of their destruction.

A rush was made upon him, but he and Nydia were hemmed in by a circle of the brides, now calm with a desperate courage, and perfectly resigned to their fates.

Weak women as they were, with their weaponless hands and white bare arms, they strove to shield the champion they were so proud of from the curved scimitar blades that began to flash threateningly in the light of the conflagration.

But Conrad, instead of raising his own weapon, smiled grimly back at the flushed countenances of hate that hemmed him in with a threatening ring, and then drawing Nydia closer and tighter to his embrace, he said, in a voice of thunder:

"It is too late. Down with your weapons, and pray, if you know how, for in another instant you will hear the voice of your foe and mine, and then it will be all over. To prayer, to prayer, to prayer!"

But it was too late already, for even whilst the echo of the corsair's last word rang on the smoke-laden air, there was a mighty roar, an upheaval of the deck beneath their feet, and a minute later only a widening ring upon the sea and a floating spar or two marked the spot where the Turkish line-of-battle ship had been blown to fragments as the flames reached the magazine.

So perished Conrad and his bride, in the moment of vengeance—for all those concerned in the abduction of Nydia perished also.

A GOOD CONDUCTOR.—A piece of wood cut from a tree is a good electrical conductor. Let it be heated and dried, it becomes an insulator. Let it be baked to charcoal, and it becomes a conductor again. Burn it again, and it becomes an insulator once more.

Young Pickwick's Schooldays.

CHAPTER LXVI.

THE DIDDLER AND PICKWICK ARE PARTED.

THE boys soon demolished the good things, while Doctor Waddle looked on with a benevolent smile.

He gracefully reclined against the wheelbarrow, and raised his brimming goblet to his lips.

But as he did so the wheelbarrow shot away, and he rolled over on his back, sending the contents of the goblet down his neck.

Miffins might have been seen to roll up a piece of string and deposit it in his pocket just after this disaster, but every eye was fixed upon the doctor, who slowly struggled into a sitting posture.

"Sir," said the schoolmaster, turning upon Parrot, "I think you have reached the years of discretion."

"What do you mean, sir?" asked Mr. Parrot. "Do you want to insult me?"

"What do you mean, sir?" cried the angry and excited Waddle. "Did you not deliberately and in cold blood deprive me of the support of that wheelbarrow?"

"I'll eat my wig if I ever did anything of the kind," returned Mr. Parrot.

"Well, all I can say is that you ought to be ashamed of yourself," observed the doctor, as he helped himself to some more whisky.

"I'll take a little if you will be so good," said Mr. Parrot, holding out his glass.

The doctor reluctantly filled the tumbler that was extended to him.

As Mr. Parrot lifted the glass to his lips Miffins, who was seting a few feet behind him, deliberately hooked up his wig with a stick which had been prepared for the purpose.

The boys were about to give a loud laugh, when a sign from young Pickwick made them restrain their merriment.

In obedience to another sign from the same quarter the wig was passed from hand to hand, and finally deposited in the doctor's pocket.

"Don't let's quarrel, Parrot," said the doctor, beaubbing with that gentleman. "Life is short. Let's enjoy ourselves while we may."

And he felt for his pocket-handkerchief.

"What are you doing with my wig?" cried Parrot, starting up angrily.

"Who's doing anything with your wig?" demanded Doctor Waddle, who was rapidly becoming very drunk.

"Why, you are, you contounded old fool; you've stolen it. There it is in your pocket," retorted Parrot.

Doctor Waddle extricated the wig from his pocket, and looked at it with an air of astonishment.

"You must have put it there yourself," he said, angrily. "I'm not fond of practical jokes, Parrot."

"Then I'm a liar, am I?" said Mr. Parrot.

"You certainly are, if you charge me with taking your nasty old wig."

This was more than the belligerent Mr. Parrot could endure. He seized a half-eaten ham and whacked the doctor over the head with it.

Doctor Waddle retorted with the skeleton of a roast goose.

The boys were delighted, and cheered them on.

And the two continued pelting one another with the fragments of the feast, until they were compelled to stop for want of any more ammunition.

By which time they both presented a nice appearance.

For they were covered with gravy, smeared with grease, and choice bits of meat, stuffing, potatoes, and other odds and ends of the banquet, adorning their hair and clothing.

"This is pretty treatment, sir," exclaimed the doctor, as he ruefully surveyed his ruined garments.

"I should think so," retorted Parrot, with equal indignation, as he extricated his wig from a big tureen of oyster-soup, into which it had fallen.

"Look at me; if you come to that, every rag I've got on is spoiled, and my wig will never be fit to put on again."

"Serves you right," said Doctor Waddle, with dignity.

"Why does it?"

"Because you began it by trying to play jokes on me."

"I deny it; I didn't do anything of the kind."

"Then who was it?" demanded the doctor.

"Some of these imps of boys, I suppose."

"Not a bit of it," said the Diddler, who saw a chance for some more fun; "I'll tell you who it was."

"You will?" exclaimed the doctor and Parrot in a breath.

"Yes, it was your friend Miffins there, and no one else."

This announcement turned the current of the doctor's wrath upon Miffins, and he rushed at that worthy with such violence that both rolled in a heap on the ground.

And at the same minute Parrot precipitated himself upon the pair.

For about five minutes the three continued to pummel one another.

By that time they all had enough of it.

So by mutual consent they stopped fighting.

It was quite time.

The doctor had two black eyes, and his face was scratched till it looked like a railway map.

Parrot was in an even worse condition, and as for Miffins, he was a perfect wreck.

They were all so dilapidated that they were ashamed to go back to the school by daylight, so they determined to remain in the grove where the picnic was held until after dark.

The boys, thus relieved of any supervision, wandered off in parties of three or four, and amused themselves in as many ways as there were different dispositions in the party.

Young Pickwick, Dick and the Diddler having a scheme of their own on hand, walked back toward the school.

Just as they reached the gate a tall, swarthy man, having the appearance of a gypsy, came up to them.

Looking at each in turn keenly, he finally handed a small bit of paper to the Diddler, and walked away.

The Diddler opened the paper, which contained a few lines of writing, and hurriedly read it.

Then he crumbled the paper in his hand, and seemed to be thinking very earnestly.

"What's up, Diddler, old boy?" asked young Pickwick, after waiting a few minutes in the hope that the Diddler would give them some explanation.

"I don't know," replied the Diddler; "excuse me, fellows; I must think about it."

And he darted away from them, and disappeared around a corner of the building.

"Well, this is a queer start, and no mistake," said Pickwick, looking at Dick with a puzzled air. "What can he be up to?"

"Don't know," responded Dick, "but we can find out easy enough."

"How can we do it?"

"By watching him, of course."

"It seems to me we'll have to find him first."

"Come along and hunt him up, then."

And the two friends went through the schoolgrounds and buildings, looking everywhere for the Diddler.

But everywhere in vain.

At length, as it was almost dark, the two boys came out on the turnpike just above the school.

As they stood there, they were joined by Swags, the fat boy, who having eaten until he had fallen asleep, had remained in the grove and was now just returning.

"Seen the Diddler, Swags?" demanded young Pickwick.

"Not since he went off with you fellows," responded the fat boy; "but I say, what fools you must be to go away and leave such good eating, such a spread, I think? Oh! wasn't it prime?"

And the fat boy smacked his thick lips with great unction.

"Hush!" cried Pickwick at this moment; "I hear wheels."

The noise of an approaching vehicle was in fact quite audible.

And a moment later it stopped nearly opposite to them, and drew up close to the other side of the road.

Where beyond the hedge there was a thick copse.

The coach was an ordinary posting affair, and the two postboys seemed as though waiting for someone, for they looked anxiously around in every direction.

"What do you think of it, Dick?" asked young Pickwick.

"It looks like an elopement more than anything else."

"So it does! Well, we must see the end of it, at all events."

Pickwick had scarcely uttered these words when the sound of voices was heard from the copse.

Then came the noise of a struggle, and some one cried for help in a half smothered voice.

"That sounds like the Diddler's voice!" exclaimed Pickwick, eagerly.

Just as he spoke several dark figures emerged from the copse.

The new-comers were four in number, and three of them were dragging the fourth, who struggled violently.

It was the Diddler.

And his assailants were the heavy-eyed man, the tall gypsy they had seen that day and Tom Ely.

Before the boys could spring to the assistance of their comrade it was too late.

The heavy-eyed man had dragged him into the coach, and at the same moment Tom Ely and the gypsy sprang to the box, the postboys lashed the horses furiously, and the vehicle tore off at full speed.

"After them, quick, fellows!" shouted Pickwick. "Cut across the fields, and we may head them off at the tollgate!"

They hastened across the fields with all speed.

But young Pickwick suddenly stopped short.

"I hear the sound of footsteps," he exclaimed.

They advanced with caution, and peered over the hedge.

Next moment they gave a subdued cry.

It was Fitzsham.

"So glad to see you, old fellow," cried young Pickwick, rushing round to the gate and clambering over it with great agility.

He was followed by Dick and the fat boy.

"Same here," returned Fitzsham, with a smile.

"Why, what on earth have you been up to, and where is the Diddler?"

Young Pickwick told him what had happened.

Fitzsham looked grave.

"We must go in search of the Diddler," he cried.

"So say I," returned young Pickwick. "Now, Swags, the best thing you can do is to go home and behave as if nothing had happened."

"Not if I knows it," returned the fat boy, speaking with great firmness and determination; "I'm coming along with you. I like the Diddler, and I ain't going to be left behind."

The three boys used all their powers of persuasion to induce him to alter his determination.

But it was in vain.

"Let him come," said Dick.

"All right," returned young Pickwick; "but if he goes to sleep we shall leave him behind."

The four boys then commenced their journey in search of the Diddler.

But we don't even know which way the heavy-eyed man took," said Dick, suddenly stopping short in the middle of the road.

The boys had never thought of this.

They looked at each other.

"Here's a nice stumbling-block," cried young Pickwick.

"I suppose we shall have to give up the idea of going after the Diddler," cried Dick.

"No," said Fitzsham; "we must try and surmount the difficulty. Let us inquire at the first posting-house we come to."

"We must lose no time," cried young Pickwick, impatiently. "Step out, Swags."

The fat boy, to the surprise of his companions, did step out.

He was fond of the Diddler, and for his sake had determined to sacrifice his personal comfort for once in a way.

They passed the toll-gate without being molested by Belcher.

That discreet old buffer remembered the prop in the stomach he had received on a former occasion, and did not interfere with them.

Quickly walking down the road, they soon reached a posting-house.

"How long is it since a coach changed horses here?" asked young Pickwick.

"Three hours," returned the stableman.

Young Pickwick's spirits rose.

"There was a dark-looking cove inside as put his head out of the window, and did nothink but swear at us while we put the horses in," continued the stableman, volunteering the information.

"And they went up?" queried young Pickwick.

"Straight up the London road," returned the man.

"Thanks," said young Pickwick, slipping half-a-crown in his hand.

They resumed their journey.

"Are we going to walk all the way to London?" groaned the bloated youth.

"I told you not to come," cried young Pickwick. "You had better go back while there is yet time."

"Shan't," returned Swags.

Swags would not give in, and trotted along as fast as his fat legs would carry him.

Night had set in, and a dark, gloomy night it was.

"We shall have some rain presently," observed young Pickwick, taking the fat boy's arm and urging him forward.

Swags's breath grew shorter and shorter, and at length he flopped down on the ground with a heavy groan, dragging young Pickwick after him.

"Why did you do that?" cried young Pickwick, rubbing his shins.

"I can't help it," cried the fat boy; "my legs were never meant for walking."

"I suppose you think they were meant for ornaments," observed Fitzsham.

The fat boy, who was being dragged to his feet by Dick and young Pickwick, regarded Jonadab angrily.

"I was not addressing my conversation to you," he cried; "so just shut up."

"Swags, I am ashamed of you," said young Pickwick, severely. "Think of poor Diddler. He may be in great danger."

Swags relapsed into silence.

He walked slowly along, supported by Dick and young Pickwick.

It was evident that he must have a rest.

But no habitation was in sight.

They pressed onward, and presently saw a light gleaming through the trees.

As they advanced they saw that the light came from the window of a little roadside beer-shop.

"There is no help for it," cried young Pickwick. "We shall have to go in and rest."

Stepping up to the door, he knocked upon it with his knuckles.

"Come in!" said a voice.

The four boys accepted the invitation, and found themselves in a low-roofed room.

An old man was blowing a very small fire with a large bellows, while a stout woman stood in the centre of the apartment, leaning on a stick.

Some cups and saucers were set out on the deal table.

Young Pickwick noticed this, and asked if they could have some tea.

The woman looked at them doubtfully.

"We were just going to have a cup of tea and go to bed," observed the old man, glancing over his shoulder, but still blowing away at the handful of coal in the small grate.

But young Pickwick would not take this hint.

He stood his ground.

"We must have a rest," he observed, and the woman grumblingly threw open a door and ushered the boys into a small inner room.

There was a horse-hair sofa in one corner, and Swags made for it at once.

"Be careful how you sit down," cried young Pickwick.

"Oh, that sofa will hold me," said Swags, flopping himself down upon it.

The sofa gave a warning creak.

But Swags was obstinate.

He would not alter his position.

Suddenly there was a yet louder creak, and the sofa giving way, the bloated youth fell over on his back.

The old woman entered the room at this juncture with a large tea-tray in her hand.

When she saw Swags rising from the ruins of her property her temper got the better of her.

She struck him a violent blow over the head with the tea-tray.

The fat boy was tired and weary, and not in the humor to submit to such treatment.

"I ain't going to be knocked about by the likes of you," he said.

"Won't you?" screamed the stout female, and she rushed at Swags, seizing him by the collar.

Her nails were long, and she used them well.

Swags's yells could be heard above the roaring of the wind, as he vainly tried to protect himself.

At this moment a window was opened from without, and a head was thrust into the room.

"Why, what's all this row about?" cried a rough voice, and looking round, the boys saw a perfect stranger.

CHAPTER LXVII.

A LIVING TOMB.

THE heavy-eyed man's coach jolted along through a narrow, crowded street.

Now and then the Diddler caught sight of the river, and the tall masts of ships.

At last the coach stopped.

The Diddler gave a sigh of relief.

The long, tedious journey was over at last, and he would now know the worst.

Anything was better than suspense.

The door of the coach was opened, and the heavy-eyed man bade the Diddler alight.

There was no course open to him but to obey.

Jumping out, he saw for the first time that Tom Ely was seated on the box.

"You here?" cried the Diddler. "I thought you had something to do with my abduction."

Tom Ely gave a spiteful grin.

"I hope you're had a pleasant ride," he said, jeeringly.

The Diddler's face flushed.

He was about to retort, but the heavy-eyed man suddenly took his arm.

"There is no time for talking," he said.

And he led the Diddler down a quiet street, with dilapidated houses on either hand.

Suddenly entering a narrow court, the heavy-eyed man stopped before a house which overlooked a dismal wharf.

Not a light gleamed from the windows.

The Diddler could plainly see that the house had the appearance of not having been inhabited for years.

A cold thrill of horror ran through him as the heavy-eyed man produced a key and put it in the lock.

At first it resisted all efforts to turn it, but at last the lock yielded, and the door flew back with a loud creaking.

"Enter," said the heavy-eyed man.

The Diddler hesitated.

He thought of making some resistance, but glancing over his shoulder he saw that Tom Ely and the tall gypsy were close behind, the latter having also boarded on the box of the coach.

"Enter, I say!" cried the heavy-eyed man, giving the Diddler a sudden push, which sent him flying down the dark and dismal passage.

The others followed, and the door slammed behind them, awaking the echoes of the old house.

The Diddler was alone with his enemies, from whom he expected no mercy.

"Where are you going to put him?" asked Tom Ely.

"In the cellar," said the heavy-eyed man, and he

advanced toward the Diddler with the intention of pushing him down a flight of stairs.

But the Diddler cleared the stairs two steps at a time.

"Don't want to be pushed," he observed; "I can walk."

"Hold your tongue," cried Tom Ely, rushing after him and dealing him a frightful blow.

The Diddler forgot all prudence.

He retorted upon Tom Ely, giving him a blow on the jaw which made him howl again.

This was the signal for a fight.

The two boys began struggling violently.

This enraged the heavy-eyed man, and snatching a stick from the gypsy, he tried to strike the Diddler.

But the eccentric youth contrived that Tom Ely should receive all the blows.

Suddenly exerting all his strength, he dashed Tom Ely against the heavy-eyed man, and then darting past the gypsy, rushed up the stairs, loudly calling for assistance.

"Help, help, help!" he cried.

Tom Ely and the two men, their first astonishment over, quickly followed him.

"Shout away!" cried the heavy-eyed man; "there's nobody to hear you."

The Diddler felt the truth of all these words, and ceased to call for help.

But he rushed away from his pursuers as fast as his legs could carry him, and speedily found himself at the top of the house.

He ran into a large room, and rushed into the extreme end of the apartment.

Suddenly his hand came in contact with a half-open door.

He stepped forward, and found himself in a large closet.

He pulled the door to; it shut with a snap.

He could hear his foes searching for him everywhere.

They did not appear to know that there was a cupboard in the room.

The Diddler's heart bounded with renewed hope.

He would wait until they gave up the search, and then try to escape.

After a few minutes he heard the sound of their retreating footsteps, which presently died away in the distance.

Waiting for a reasonable time the Diddler gave the door a gentle push.

But it did not move.

"Here's a pretty fix—'pon honor," he muttered; "nobody knows where I am."

The idea of remaining a prisoner was horrible.

Great beads of perspiration stood upon his brow.

He kicked and tore at the door.

But it was of no avail.

He was about to give up all hopes of getting out, when he suddenly remembered that he had a knife in his pocket.

With it he hoped to hack his way through the door.

It would take a long time, but still this was his only chance.

He went to work with a will, and gave the door a terrific blow with his pocket-knife.

The blade snapped, and he impatiently flung away the handle, feeling that his last chance had failed him.

Suddenly he felt the floor moving beneath him.

He tried to clutch at the wall as he sank down—down—down with sickening rapidity.

The Diddler had been standing on a clumsily arranged lift, and the rusty chains giving way, it came down to the bottom of the house with a run.

He gave a glad cry as he saw that he was in a large underground store-house supported by huge iron pillars, such as are to be seen in the neighborhood of the docks.

Round about lay large packing cases and bundles, relics of the time when the place had been filled with merchandise and alive with busy men.

But it was now deserted and quiet as the grave.

"Wonder which is the way out!" muttered the Diddler.

At that moment he heard the sound of heavy footsteps and loud voices in dispute.

Hastily jumping into a large packing-case, the Diddler crouched down.

The voices came nearer, and he found that they belonged to Mr. Leadbitter and the tall gypsy.

"Give me my money and let me go," cried the latter.

"Wait until I find that boy," returned the heavy-eyed man.

"No," cried the gypsy; "I agreed to assist you to bring him here, and that was all. Give me my money, I say again, and let me go. I cannot breathe in this close, unwholesome atmosphere."

The heavy-eyed man gave a sneering laugh.

"You won't give me my money!" cried the gypsy, with a dangerous look on his dark face; "then I will tear out your false heart."

He sprang upon the heavy-eyed man, and a fierce struggle ensued.

But Leadbitter speedily proved himself to be the stronger of the two.

He gave the gypsy a violent blow upon the temple.

"Take that, you fool," he cried, "and know how I treat those who try to thwart me."

The gypsy rose to his feet.

His face was livid.

He was about to make another rush at the heavy-eyed man, but stopped short as a pistol was pointed at him.

"If you advance another step I will shoot you through the head," cried the heavy-eyed man, savagely.

The gypsy looked at him from under his lowering brows.

"We shall meet again," he said, "when we shall be more fairly matched."

To give emphasis to his words he brought his fist down upon the packing-case in which the Diddler was concealed.

His hand came in contact with a nail, and it bled profusely.

But he did not care about that, for the rotten board had given way, and the Diddler was disclosed to view.

The Diddler shrank away from the two evil-looking men.

"Come out, you young whelp!" exclaimed the heavy-eyed man, roughly clutching him by the arm.

"Are you going to murder me?" cried the Diddler, as the two men dragged him along.

The only answer he received was a binding blow across the face.

He was half stunned, and no longer made any resistance.

They dragged him down a flight of stone-steps, and into a dark and dismal cellar.

Tom Ely followed him with a grin of intense amusement on his sallow face.

"Why don't you kill me at once?" cried the Diddler; "the greatest kindness you could do me—'pon honor!"

"Not if we know it," said Tom Ely, with a brutal grin. "We want more fun out of you than that."

"What are you going to do with me, then?" asked the Diddler.

He felt sick at heart.

"We are going to brick you up in this cellar and leave you to die," cried Tom Ely.

"You would not starve me?" exclaimed the Diddler.

The heavy-eyed man held up his hand.

"I'll give you your freedom on one condition, and one condition only," he said.

"Two conditions!" cried the Diddler, eagerly.

"That you take a berth on board ship and never return to England, or correspond with your friends," said the heavy-eyed man.

"Give up my birthright, you mean!" said the Diddler; "I would rather die!"

"Then get out of my sight!" cried the heavy-eyed man, pointing to a narrow opening in the wall.

The Diddler drew back, but he was roughly pushed through the opening.

"I'll give you one more chance before I brick up the opening," said the heavy-eyed man. "Will you fulfill my conditions?"

"Never!" cried the Diddler.

His mind was made up.

"Gypsy," he cried, appealingly, "can you, who so love the fresh air of heaven, leave a poor boy to die in this loathsome hole?"

But his appeal was unheeded.

The heavy-eyed man began to close the only opening to this living tomb.

"Once more, I said, will you accept my terms?" he cried, hoarsely.

The Diddler hesitated.

But only for a moment.

"Do your worst!" he cried.

"Fool!" cried the heavy-eyed man, and he was about to leave the Diddler to his fate, when the tall gypsy interfered.

"Let the boy have a loaf and a pitcher of water," said the gypsy.

"I wouldn't," cried Tom Ely.

While the heavy-eyed man was hesitating the gypsy went away, and returned with a loaf and some water.

He took the stones away and thrust the loaf and pitcher through the opening.

"Thanks!" cried the Diddler.

But the gypsy, speaking harshly, once more bricked up the opening, and the unhappy Diddler was left to his own reflections.

He was in a terrible position, with only a loaf and a pitcher of water between him and starvation.

"If Picky knew where I was how quickly he would come to the rescue!" thought the Diddler. "But he can never find me here, and I shall die without seeing any of my old friends again."

The thought was bitter, indeed.

(To be continued.)

"Young Pick Wick's Schoolboys" was commenced in No. 668.

LOST ON AN ICE-FLOE.

ONE Easter Monday, a few years since, the fishermen of Upernavik, in Greenland, descried in the open sea, driving into the shore, vast cakes of ice, on which their practiced eyes detected a number of seals.

Among the first to start in their sleds were Peter Newvig's family. Peter took his three younger children with him; his son Karl had his mother and the rest in his, to which twelve large dogs were harnessed, as he was loaded with the tents and provisions.

As soon as they reached the most favorable point on the shore the tent was pitched, and the two men started on the seals.

To their disappointment, only one was within reach. This was soon secured, and—not to be disappointed of the harvest so temptingly offered, they started over the floes that had wedged in near the shore to get a shot at some which, in the distance, seemed like dots.

Their eagerness led them far beyond the limit that prudence would have dictated, and before they could cover any with their guns an ominous report aroused them to a sense of their danger.

The ice was breaking behind them, and in the rough sea and high wind they would soon be swept out.

They rushed back, but the gap was too wide to leap. They ran along the fissure, hoping to reach a narrower spot, but all in vain; their floe was completely detached, and again on its voyage.

A moment of prayer, a moment of tears, and the hardy men faced their fate. Indeed, as the seals climbed up on the floe near Peter and Karl they fired, and killed two splendid fellows.

The shots drew the rest of the family from the tent, and it was consoling, at least, to find that the hunters' danger was seen. Relief would soon come. Vain hope!

Night set in, and with it a fearful storm. The floe drove before the wind, crashing in the darkness against berg and cake, till they expected every moment to see it pave beneath their feet, and consign them to the treacherous bosom of ocean. At last, with a shock, the floe parted, and in the obscurity they beheld their dogs, which had hitherto been near them, float away.

Deprived of these faithful comrades, the hunters gave up all hope.

* * * * *

While merry-making was going on in Upernavik the quick ear of Nicholina, the betrothed of Karl, caught the baying of dogs from the seaside.

She called attention to it, but no one heeded her. When at last it rose in a dismal wail the head man determined to see what it really was.

A party started, Nicholina in the front, so far ahead that her father called her back. But she had made a discovery that sent the blood thrilling through her veins.

"They are Newvig's dogs!" she cried, as she sped on. "Yes, there they are! One, two, three—twenty-one! And what has become of him?"

"They are lost!" cried one near.

"Never!" she exclaimed. "The night will soon clear. Scatter along the shore to save them!"

As the girl had predicted, a dim light at last afforded them to scan the vexed surface of the sea. Keen eyes descried a floe with two men on it.

"It is Karl!" she cried—"my Karl! Quick! Man the boats!"

She was the first at the life-saving boat and sliding to run it down. In vain two young men tried to detain her, but she was the first to seize a paddle and leap into the boat when it touched the water.

Plying their paddles as only men of that sea can, the crew sent their boat spinning from sunny crest to crest. Those on the shore watched in deep anxiety till their friends in the boat were almost lost to sight.

In vain they tolled on. The two black specks in the distance seemed to recede more rapidly than they advanced. At last the young man lost heart, and cried out that they must give up.

But Nicholina cheered them on, and, although they lost sight of the floe and its burden, she spurred them on, till, rounding a floe that lay in their way, they saw Peter lying covered up.

Nicholina's heart sank. Was Karl lost, after all her struggle to save him? No, the brave fellow had heaped on his exhausted father all the clothing he could spare, and crouched down behind a sheltering spar of ice, sought to defy the cold.

"Thank God, they are alive!" she cried, as, plying the paddle with new vigor, she drove the boat to the edge.

Men jumped on the ice and soon lifted Peter, now insensible, into the boat, while Karl, helped to enter, fell before Nicholina's feet and murmured words that her heart caught sooner than her ears.

They were soon laid in the bottom of the boat, and the now wearied crew turned shoreward. There all were alike anxious for the missing men and their rescuers.

As the boat approached, not seeing Karl and his father, their friends bettered Nicholina had perilled her life in vain; but then strong hands were soon bearing the rescued men to a warm cabin.

Nicholina was borne in triumph through the street of Upernavik, and her heroism is the theme of Greenland stories to this day.

Rob Rollalong, the Runaway.

By BRACEBRIDGE HEMYNG,

AUTHOR OF THE "JACK HARKAWAY" AND "DICK LIGHTHEART" STORIES, ETC., ETC., ETC.

CHAPTER XXII.

(Continued from page 366.)

IT was an awful situation to be in, because she had discovered, when too late, that she did not love Vangs, and never could love him, having been led astray by a girlish fancy, when she did not know the real character of the man, and after a rigid self-examination, she found that she did love Rob Rollalong, whom she knew had been all along devoted to her.

"Are you ready?" said the professor, whose unsteady gait showed that he was under the influence of deep potations.

"Y-e-s," said Vangs.

"Will you take this woman to be your wedded wife, and hold her for better and for worse, just as the lock may turn out, and what's yours shall be hern, and what's hern shall be his'n—I mean yourn?"

"I will," responded Vangs.

"I guess that's about the ticket."

"Seems so. But the girl ain't got to be talked to."

"Oh, no. She's got no say at all in it. She'll have all the say after she's married, and you bet you she'll give you all you want, like the rest of the women. They're all honey while you're courting them, my festive fungus, but afterward, when they've got their claws on you with a good grip, it's good fun. I've been there."

"Is it all over?"

"Put the ring on."

"I ain't got none."

"Well, we'll suppose it done. Now, Miss Hattie, you've changed your name to Vangs."

"Yes," said Vangs, "and mind you don't show your fangs, or you'll get considerable of a licking, and don't you forget it. I'm your lord and master now. Will you be good?"

"Let me die!" said Hattie.

"Not much!" replied Vangs, with a loud laugh.

"Let's have a little bit of jollification on your wedding-night, boss," said the professor. "You've had the minister to your house, and everything is fixed to rights. The girl's your wife according to the law of the island, and what more can any festive fungus want?"

Vangs opened a bottle of champagne, which he and Johnson had extracted from the ship's stores, which were in the adjoining apartment, and he poured out two tumblersful.

"Here's a go," said the professor.

"Drink hearty," replied Vangs.

They liked the experiment with the sparkling wine so well that they kept up the amusement for half an hour, alternating the excitement with whisky.

The result was that the professor speedily joined Johnson in his somnolent condition.

As he rolled on the floor Vangs looked at him reproachfully.

"Pro-fessor!" he exclaimed, with tipsy gravity.

"What's that, my festive fungus?"

"You don't mean to tell me that you're drunk—hic?"

"Not drunkish. Only little under the weatherish. Beastly climate. Thirst."

"I'm sober—hic."

"You sobersh? Wonderful mansh. Regular sheeshoned caskish. That's what I call you."

"But you've got to wake up," said Vangs.

"What for? Theresh no waking up about me, boosh."

"Go on guard—hic."

"Go on guardsh. Ha, ha! pretty good jokesh that. Go on guardsh yourself, my festive funguh," replied Mr. Tode Stoole, who was rapidly sinking into a happy state of oblivion.

"I'm blessed!" exclaimed Vangs, "if this isn't a fine set-out. What am I to do? But I've been married. You're my wife, Hattie. Ain't you, my dear?"

"No. It is a fraud, and you know it," she replied.

"My angel."

"Be silent, sir," cried Hattie.

"My sweet one," persisted Vangs.

"If I were not bound, I'd make you sorry for this," the brave girl exclaimed, hoping to awe him by a firm demeanor.

"My lambkin, kiss her hub. Come, now."

He arose from his chair, and with an effort knelt at her feet.

"Kiss me, my baby; pretty kisses," he said.

If Hattie's hands were bound, her feet were free, and she gave him a kick which sent him sprawling on his back, and so drunk was he that he could not rise, though he made several attempts to do so.

"Shiver my daylights," he exclaimed. "There's something very uneven about this floor, or else I'm not the man I used to be. Well, I give it up. Pass. Want a draw. Good-night, all—hic. God bless—hic—baby."

This was his last coherent utterance.

His eyes closed, and his lower jaw dropping down, he gave vent to loud grunts.

The professor and Jack Johnson had already taken deep draughts of the waters of oblivion, and they were in a state of blissful ignorance of all around.

Tom did they celebrate this first night in the castle, and then by their lolly did they lose the splendid position they had obtained. Doctor Amos saw that the time had come for action.

He had been longing ever so long and ardently to put an end to the agony, which he was sure Hattie must be suffering, but like a good and prudent general, he preferred to wait till the plum was ripe enough to fall, rather than shake the tree and run any risk.

"Ah!" he said, speaking aloud and throwing off all reserve. "You seize and secure Jack Johnson."

"Yes, sir."

"You, Kedge, take the professor into your safe-keeping, and I will personally attend to friend Vangs. No sleep to night. We will watch till morning, when they will wake out of their drunken stupor, and then we're sickie—no to be conserved. They shall start off on their travels in an open boat."

"Your head's level, doc," replied Kedge.

All were in high spirits at being so near regaining their pretty and comfortable home.

"Let me go first," said Rob.

"Certainly, if you wish to."

"I want to set Hattie free. Oh! isn't it bully? Do you know, doc, when I look at those beasts down there, it makes me feel like swearing off for ever? I shall never touch a drop of anything again without thinking of those."

"There is all the difference, my boy, between moderation and excess. Now, down you go, and I wish I were so sure of having a nice kiss as you are, you rascal," said the doctor, with a smile.

Rob raised the trap-door, slid down in true sailor fashion, and was, in less than no time, standing before the astonished Hattie.

Out flashed his knife, the cords were cut and Hattie threw herself in his arms, while he covered her face with kisses.

"Oh! Rob, Rob, is this a dream?" she cried, shedding tears of joy.

"No, my darling. *It's* a magnificent reality," he replied.

"Here's the doctor and Kedge, too. Haven't you managed things well?"

"We've done our level best, and what more can man hope to do?"

"Good-even-ng, Miss Hattie," said the doctor. "Now, Rob, stop that spooning, and do your duty. Busine-s first and pleasure afterward."

"Right, sir," replied Bob, "I had forgotton about that; but you must excuse me under the circumstances."

Disengaging Hattie from his embrace in a gentle manner, he proceeded to secure Jack Johnson.

"You villain!" said Rob; "it's lucky you got as you are, for I'd have made you slip your wind if you'd tought me."

The three men were secured, but they were perfectly unconscious of the kind of attention of which they were the objects.

"Rob," exclaimed the doctor, "we are masters of our own once more, and we haven't had a square meal to-day. Suppose we indulge ourselves? Hattie, my child, take a glass of wine. You need it. The wretches have made you tremble all over."

"Perhaps it's the excitement of Hattie's marriage," exclaimed Kedge, slyly.

"Oh, don't talk such nonsense! It's too absurd," replied Hattie, blushing up to the eyes.

Rob prepared the supper, of which all partook, after which Hattie retired to the bedroom they had fixed up for her, and sought the rest of which she stood so much in need.

The doctor had intended to keep the boys up, but he thought better of it, and the drunken sleepers were securely bound, and one would be enough to watch them.

So he lighted a cigar, placed his revolver on the table, sent the boys to bed, and sat up during the weary watches of the night, keeping his solitary vigil.

The morning was well advanced, and breakfast was over, before either of the prisoners stirred.

Vangs was the first to wake up.

"Say, fellows," he asked, in a drowsy tone, "what's this? None of your larkx. Undo my arms and give me a drink. I'm that bad I could drink a pond dry. Dash my delights if I haven't got a thirst on me a mile and a half long!"

"Mr. Vangs," said the doctor, "you're my prisoner."

"Hey? What? By thunder! we've made fools of ourselves. It's the longest stick that knocks the persimmons, and we've been surprised."

With difficulty he raised himself up on his elbow and looked at the doctor with bleared eyes, speaking with hot breath, through parched and feverish lips.

"Kick those other fellows in the ribs!" said Doctor Amos. "I want to clean out this pig-sty. The brutes pollute the house."

Rob and Kedge quickly roused the prisoners, taking a delight in the office.

"Here! I say, my festive fungus!" exclaimed the professor, "I want you to stop right away. Oh, Jerusalem! what's this? Caught napping?"

"Do!" cried Johnson. "Sold! Well, if we haven't been the stupidest donkeys! Lost all just for the sake of a drink."

"And you started it," said Vangs.

"I? You were the worst of the lot," replied Johnson.

"Don't excite yourself by reproaching each other, gentlemen," exclaimed the doctor. "Your stay on this island is drawing to a close. Unarm them, Kedge. Take away their knives and pistols."

"At least leave us our knives," said Vangs.

"I'll leave you nothing to cut with."

"What are you going to do with us?" asked Vangs.

"That's precisely what we are coming to. We have recaptured the castle, and recognizing the fact that we cannot allow you to reside on this island, as your acts are too wicked and treacherous, consequently we have decided to start you off in an open boat left by the savages in their flight, and let you exercise your skill in making land."

The three men seemed surprised and delighted that they were not to be put to death.

"But," concluded the doctor, with emphasis, "if you ever dare to set foot on this island again, you will pay for your rashness with your lives! And now, march!"

Vangs was resisted to his fate.

They were obliged to untie his arms, as, being a cripple, he could not walk without crutches, but the doctor walked by his side, holding a revolver at his head.

LOST ON AN ICE-FLOE.—THE RESCUE.—SEE PAGE 379.

Johnson following in charge of Rob, and the professor, looking very disgusted, miserable and chop-fallen, was guarded by Kedge.

In this manner the procession wended its way to the shore.

CHAPTER XXIII.

KING KALIMUCKRA.

THE canoe which the cannibals had left in their headlong flight was still lying on the beach. The paddles were inside, and there was a rude attempt at a sail made out of matting lying between the thwarts, and in the centre, or amidships, was a mast.

To reach the boat they had to pass by the scene of the late massacre, and the corpses of the slain savages were festering hideously in the sun.

The wind was blowing off the shore, which was an advantage to the prisoners, who would have less difficulty in reaching one of the numerous islands of the group.

When the captives reached the canoe they were untied and put in one by one.

Johnson went first, the professor second, and Vangs was the last to embark.

"Now," exclaimed the doctor, "I have a few words to say before we push you off and start you on your voyage."

The three men were sitting sulkily on the thwarts, and Vangs replied:

"Say on, and cut it short. We're here to listen, but you've no need to pile up the agony more than you can help."

"Nor have I any intention of doing so," answered the doctor. "We are peaceably inclined, and do not want to come into contact with you. If we do meet again, you will have no mercy shown you, for we shall not scruple to shoot you."

"You're the boss of the situation, and I feel thankful to you for sparing our lives," said Vangs.

"That shows a good spirit on your part," replied the doctor.

"Oh, pshaw!" exclaimed Johnson; "what's the use of eating humble pie? That is not my style by a long way. After all, what have we to thank them for? They spare our lives because they don't want our blood on their consciences, but at the same time they condemn us to death."

"How?" asked Doctor Ames.

"Oh, you can't come over me with your wishy-washy humanity. You've put us in an open boat, without compass, provisions, arms, or water. If we don't perish of starvation, we shall be eaten by the cannibals."

"Of course, you've got to run a risk; but, after all, so long as there is life there is hope. We were wrecked on this island, and yet we live," replied the doctor.

"Yes, live in the lap of luxury, because you had the ship and her stores."

"Well, I don't want to discuss the matter with you," said the doctor. "If you die, you deserve to."

"Go on and preach," cried Johnson.

"Don't be insolent, after our kindness to you."

The professor was chewing a hunk of gum which he had taken off the trunk of a tree.

"Hang me!" he exclaimed, "if I see much kindness in you, my festive tungus."

It was very warm, and he wiped his perspiring brow with his hand.

"You are all three hard cases. We want to get rid of you, and if you ever come to this island after our banishing you to-day, we will put an ornamental figure-head on you!"

The professor wiped some more.

"If we do come here again, my amiable sawbones," he said, "it will be to do the same to you."

"Hush up!" exclaimed Vangs. "Push off, captain. We're ready to sail. Good-by, and thank you. Say thank you, Johnson."

"Not I. Do you think I'm such a camel as to thank that snipe? Why, I'd be sorry to trade jackknives with him."

"Let 'em go," said the doctor, who, with the help of Rob and Kedge, shoved the boat off.

She floated in three feet of water, and her crew began to ply the paddles.

Soon the wind and the current caught her, her sail was set, and she left the island of Juan Fernandez behind, until the doctor and the boys became mere specks on the horizon; but the latter did not leave the shore until the boat was out of sight, as they feared that Vangs and his associates might try to land again, and make one last, desperate effort to capture the castle and put its rightful owners to death.

When they were satisfied that the boat was fairly on her way, Doctor Ames and the boys returned to the castle, where Hattie, who had recovered from her fright, had arranged an excellent dinner for them, to which they sat down and did justice.

The departure of the scoundrels who had tried to dispossess them of their home was an immense relief to them, and they enjoyed a very happy evening, poor Hattie being especially delighted with her escape from the danger which threatened her at the hands of Vangs.

They could now live together in Christianity, till the soil, grow their corn, cure the grapes, milk and kill the goats for food, and amuse themselves profitably in a variety of ways.

But we must leave them in their happy Arcadia while we follow the fortunes of the boat which contained Vangs and his companions.

They were dejected enough, as may well be imagined, for, to add to their misery, they suffered from severe headaches and a raging thirst, the result of their last night's debauch.

In addition to having lost the good home which their successful strategy had given them, their fate was uncertain, and they could not tell whether, when they made land, they would fall into the hands of the cruel savages or not.

Their experience with the cannibals was quite enough to make their flesh creep at the recollection of it.

With bleared eyes, haggard faces, parched lips, and dejected looks, they sat in the boat, which sailed slowly and clumsily over the sea.

"I'm not heavy on water," exclaimed Johnson. "Never did take kindly to it, but I'd give a hat for a drink."

"So would I," said the professor. "A glass of croton would be worth my bottom dollar, and I'd rather have it than the best bourbon."

"That doctor's mean," remarked Vangs, "or he wouldn't have started us without a keg of fresh water, knowing we've been bad the night before."

"Oh, he don't amount to shucks," said Johnson.

"Not he. I reckon he's a snipe, and as much a real doctor as the professor is a genuine professor."

"Don't go back on me, my festive fungus," said Tode Stocle. "I am really a doctor, learned in the arts. A Bachelor of Arts and a Doctor of Laws. I am entitled to this distinction, but I simply base my claims to public confidence on the fact of my connection with the Philadelphia Society for the Further Propagation and Development of Edible Fungi."

"Never mind about that, whoever you are; titles are not much use to any of us now," replied Vangs. "I've heard the song of 'Paddle your own Canoe,' and now we've got to do so."

There was a melancholy pause, during which the wind drove a wave into the boat, drenching her occupants.

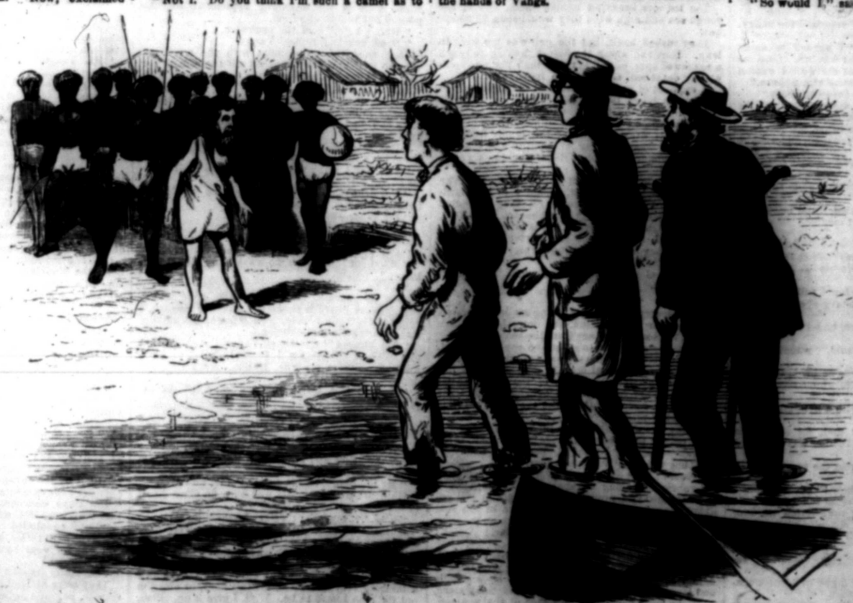
"Put your paddle astern, Johnson, and keep her before the wind," cried Vangs.

"Ay, ay," replied Johnson.

The professor was in the bow, and looking steadily before him.

"Land ahead!" he exclaimed.

"Where away?"



ROB ROLLALONG, THE RUNAWAY.—"A LITTLE MAN WITH A LONG BEARD AND WHISKERS WAS AT THE HEAD OF THE SAVAGES, AND HE GESTICULATED WILDLY, AS IF ORDERING THE NATIVES BACK."—SEE PAGE 378.

TALKS WITH BOYS ABOUT FOREIGN LANDS.—DOVER CASTLE.—SEE PAGE 382.

"On the lar-board bow."

"Good," said Vangs. "I do not care where we land, so long as we is to touch water, for I'm that dry I could drain a ditch."

The island in front of them had a low-lying shore, and, to the horror of those who were nearing it, there were a number of houses, made of wood and thatched with reeds, visible.

"Cannibals, by George!" said Johnson. "What can we do, do?"

"Heaven only knows!" replied the professor.

"You'll become an edible tongue," said Vangs, with a laugh.

"That remark applies to you as well as to me, my gay old mushroom," retorted the professor.

"Shall I put the boat about, Vangs?" asked Johnson.

"How the deuce are we to do it?" answered Vangs. "You know very well that the wind is against us, and we can't fight against it; besides, if we put out to sea and work our lives out, we shall only suffer the more from thirst and hunger. Better face the savages."

"I don't care," replied Johnson.

"As for me," said the professor, "they may dismember me, eat me up into joints and enjoy themselves, only I do hope they'll cook me with mushrooms."

"Happy thought; book it," said Vangs.

"Professor *avec champignons*," said Johnson, "or professor *avec* lungs. I dare say you'd eat as well with the latter as with the former, governor."

"They won't digest me without plenty of pepper," answered Mr. Tode Stoole.

"And that is an article of commerce they don't produce here."

"No matter. Cannibals are frauds, and if they eat a man who has been in the British service, they ought to keep him until Thanksgiving or Christmas Day."

The boat rapidly reached the shore, and as it did so, a number of almost naked natives crowded down, armed with bows and arrows and wooden swords.

"It is a case, I'm afraid," said Johnson. "Good-by, mother."

Vangs and the professor looked very anxious and made no remark, while the boat was driven rapidly to the beach.

A little man with a long beard and whiskers was at the head of the savages, and he gesticulated wildly, as if ordering the natives back.

As the boat got nearer, the inmates perceived that the little man was white.

This gave them some hope.

They thought that if a white man was among the inhabitants, and had authority over them, they had some chance for their lives.

Now was a time of trial, and each man clinched his teeth firmly as the boat ran ashore in the breakers.

Life or death!

They could not tell which.

Such had been their sufferings for the last few hours that they assumed a sullen and dogged behavior, as if they did not much care which it were to be.

Jumping into the surf, they walked ashore, Jack Johnson going first.

The little, excitable man faced him, with a crowd of impatient natives behind them.

"Who are you? Where you come from?" he said, in broken English. "*Mon Dieu!* It does my heart good to see one of—what you say—my own color. *Sacrebleu!* you are white. Where you hail from?"

"New York," replied Johnson.

"Ah! That is great city. I respec' moch ze New Yorkers; I am French myself."

"French!" said Johnson. "All right, old son. We're glad to meet you."

GEORGE G. BROWN, JR., PUPIL OF GRAMMAR SCHOOL NO. 26, GATES AVENUE, BROOKLYN, N. Y.

Vangs had picked up his crutches and advanced to the Frenchman.

"Pardon me, mounseer," he said. "But I'm boss of this expedition."

"*Bon, bon!* Where you come from?"

"We are from America, but have been wrecked here."

"How get this canoe? Say how come by cannibals' canoe?"

"Are you not cannibals here?"

"Were once. Never eat mans now. *Jamais.*"

"We were all wrecked on an island near here, found the canoe, and sailed away because it was deserted."

"Ver glad to see you. Been wrecked myself. *Naufrage!* I am from Marseilles. My name is Bourgain. I am little man. *Mes amis* call me petit Bourgain. I teach ze cannibals they must not eat human flesh."

"Bully for you, petit Bourgain!" said Vangs. "We are lucky to meet with you."

"Ver lucky. *Bonne* chance here."

The Frenchman was good-tempered, good-looking, and just the sort of man that the voyagers could have wished to meet with.

It was, indeed, a fortunate circumstance for them.

ELSIE TASSIE, PUPIL OF GRAMMAR SCHOOL NO. 26, GATES AVENUE, BROOKLYN, N. Y.

"Only you three? You *seulement* saved?" asked Bourgain.

"That's all."

"Big ship? *Grand vaisseau?*"

"Ye-s," replied Vangs.

"Well, me introduce you to the king."

"Got a king here?"

"Yes."

"Good king?"

"*Mais, oui.* King Kalimuckra. He is all of a king that you could wish."

"Well," said Vangs, "I guess we'll depose the king and establish a republic."

"I am a republican," replied Bourgain; "that is why I am here. I left my country, ma *belle France*, because of the tyranny of Napoleon 3, but here you cannot make ze republic unless you have help."

"It is very strange that the more ignorant the people are," replied Vangs, "the more they go in for kings and queens."

"That is so, sir. I quite agree with you. Did not France send Lafayette to ze United States? Did not you imbibe your principles of independence from our great Mirabeau? Ah, well, let me kiss you on ze cheek, shake you by ze hand. I was ze only one save on my wreck. No one else, and I have been here five years."

"That's time enough to get settled," replied Vangs.

"*Oui, oui.*"

"How is it they didn't kill you, sir?" said Vangs.

"Oh! I was going to be killed when I first came, but ze daughter of ze king see me, and *l'amour*—what you say love—come up in her mind, and she save my life and I marry her."

"You have a wife here?"

"*Helas!* no. She die two year; yaes, *depuis*, two year she is dead, but I friends with ze king now."

"Will you save us?"

"Of course I will," replied Bourgain. "It is ze great pleasure of my life to meet with you. Now I can talk and enjoy myself. What has my life been with ze *sauvages?* I learn their language, I talk, I eat, I drink, I sleep, *et voi à tout.* It is not living. It is existence. Now I have some one of whom I can appreciate."

(For continuation, see next page.)

First Prize.—The Residence of the Hon. Nathan B. Lewis, Pine Hill, N. J.

OUR DRAWING TABLE.—FIFTH COMPETITION.

Second Prize.—A Newsboy.

OUR DRAWING TABLE.—FIFTH COMPETITION.

Third Prize.—A Bull.

OUR DRAWING TABLE.—FIFTH COMPETITION.

Distinguished Scholars of Brooklyn (N. Y.) Schools.

GEORGE G. BROWN, JR.,

PUPIL OF GRAMMAR SCHOOL NO. 26, GATES AVENUE, BROOKLYN, N. Y.

GEORGE G. BROWN is a prominent scholar of Grammar School No. 26, Gates Avenue, Brooklyn, N. Y. He was born in that city, December 13th, 1865, making him fourteen years of age. He is the son of George G. and Josephine Brown. He commenced going to school when about six years old in a private school in New York, and finally entered his present school in the fourth grade of the Primary Department. He has now been for one year a member of the highest grammar class in the school, in which he is making a per centage of ninety-eight. An inquiry addressed to the teachers of the different classes gives in every case a most favorable account of young Brown. He has made it his duty to study well, and to show the most exact obedience. Cheerful and amiable in his character, intercourse with him is always pleasant on the part of both the teachers and his classmates. He is pushing and ambitious. His desire is to learn, and he is willing to do all that is possible on his own part to accomplish the best results. He is an erect, well-grown boy, with respectful manners. His face is always bright and his steps quick. Study is thus made pleasant by a willing spirit, and he is beginning life in a habit which will do most to make it successful hereafter.

ELSIE TASSIE,

PUPIL OF GRAMMAR SCHOOL NO. 26, GATES AVENUE, BROOKLYN, N. Y.

ELSIE TASSIE is a pupil evidently of much interest in her class and school, and in our interview with her she certainly awakened a like feeling on our own part. She is now a member of the first grammar class of Grammar School No. 26, Gates

Avenue, Brooklyn, N. Y. She was born in Brooklyn, November 22d, 1865, and is therefore fourteen years of age. She is the daughter of Thomas and Sarah J. Tassie. When seven years old she began to attend the public schools of Brooklyn. While her record is certainly excellent where, she has distinguished herself to the highest degree in her present school. She now ranks at the head of her class. Her teachers spoke very warmly about her. She is a most amiable, kind-hearted and truthful girl. Her intelligence and propriety of deportment are not only of interest in themselves, but they are a certain influence upon those about her. She is respected and beloved. Her gentle nature, her patient diligence, and her genuine success as a scholar, all appeal to the sincere appreciation of those who see her from day to day. She has a well-developed head and expressive features. Of her it can be said that she labored for the scholarly honors which she has now, and that all her acquirements, like her virtues, are borne with a becoming modesty.

ROB ROLLALONG, THE RUNAWAY.

(Continued from preceding page.)

"Take solid comforts with, eh?" answered Vangs.

"Yes; that is ze truth. But I must not keep you here on the *sable*—what you call sand. You understand my Engleesh?"

"Oh, yes, I comprehend pretty well."

"I not speak ze Engleesh ver well; but I have been at Londres, and I pick up some few vorts; *très peu*—ver leetle."

"I wish I could patter your lingo as well as you do ours."

"Ah! you Americans are so ver nice—so polite. Charming co'ntry ze *Etats Unis*—what you call United States. You pay me such *agréable* compliment. How you call yourself, monsieur?"

"Name of Vangs; this is Mr. Johnson; this Professor Tode Stoole."

M. Bourgain bowed three times, with great pobteness.

"Ver glad to have ze honor to make your acquaintance, monsieurs," he exclaimed. "I do not care now for being wreck on this desert island. Monsieur Vangs, accept, if you please, of my most distinguished con-ideration. Monsieur Johnson, I am your servant. Professor, I shake your hand. I am not of ze science myself. Me, no, I am not a scrand; mine was ze trade of ze *cordonnier*—what you call shoemaker. I make shoes now for ze cannibals. Yaes, it is so. When I wreck I vas going to China—*mais, oui.* I take a *voyage en Chine* to make shoes for ze Chinese ladies in Canton. In Paris I have money; *grande boutique*, which monsieur my brother manages. Oh, oui, we made ze boots for ze Jockey Club. I have ten, twenty men work for us."

"Quite in a large way of business," said the professor.

"Yaes, Mr. Tode Stoole, that is so. Here I am nobody; but I do's I like once *le roi*. Ze king ver fond of *petit* Bourgain."

"Well, Mr. Bourgain," exclaimed Vangs, "we are very grateful to you for your kind reception; but as we've been in an open boat so long, we should take it as a favor if you could have a drink of water and a hunk of dried fish."

"You shall have something better zan zat," replied Bourgain.

"Where do you live?"

"Way back of ozer trees."

"Does the king live here?"

"*Mais, non.* This is only ze leetle fishing village. *Pour attraper les poissons.* Catch ze fish, you know. Ze King Kalimuckra, he live two, three miles in the co'ntry. *Mais*, you have *soif*—what you call thirst, and you have *faim*—what you call hunger. *Dis donc.* Come wit' me to my house, and I vil giv you ze kid *rôti*, ze sweet potato, and some vine I make myself out of ze grape."

"Wine?"

"Yaes. It is ze good vine; something like to sherry. You have taste of ze sherry wine?"

"Lots of times."

"Then you it found to your liking?"

"I guess so."

"Zat is goot," said *petit* Bourgain; "glad to hear that. Come long now to my house, and eat and drink before ze king dine."

"Will his majesty favor us with a visit?"

"*Mais, oui*, he sure to come and see you; but you have no fear. They eat up ze mans no more now. I have change all zat. It see or right, my goot friend. *Allons marchons, en route.*"

He waved his hand to the curious savages who had gathered round the new arrivals, and the latter fell back, making a lane for them to pass through.

The inhabitants of this island were tall, muscular, well-formed men, with large foreheads and intelligent faces.

Their clothing was of the slenderest kind, being nothing more than a strip of matting tied round the loins, that worn by the women being a little longer than that of the men.

Their skins were of a reddish hue; their hair and eyes dark, and the former was long and anointed with oil made from the palm-tree.

The houses in which they lived were built of roughly-hewn timber, the cracks and interstices being stuffed with grass, and the roofs were made of reeds, which kept out the rain.

That in which Bourgain lived was no more pretentious than the rest, though he himself wore a tattered coat, and pair of pants which had seen better days.

An old woman was lounging under a sort of portico, and she held the distinguished post of housekeeper to the good-natured little Frenchman.

He spoke to her, and she quickly vanished into a back-room, while Bourgain himself took an earthenware jar from a closet and placed it on the table, with some cups of the same manufacture.

"Now, gentlemen, help yourselves. Drink all that you shall require. This is liberty hall. How you like my wine?" he exclaimed.

They all pronounced it excellent, and when the old woman brought them some cold goat-meat and bread-fruit, they ate a substantial meal.

"Here are cigars and pipes—which you take?" he continued.

At the sight of the cigars, some short-cut tobacco, and the roughly-made clay pipes, every one was astonished.

"Where did you get those, captain?" asked Vangs.

"I make zem myself. We have plenty of tobacco on zis island. Ze plant does grow itself wild here."

"Is that so? And do the natives use it?"

"They chew a leaf once in a while, but not smoke. Me, *petit* Bourgain, once try to teach ze *roi* to smoke, but it make him so sick he ver near had me beheaded. Ha, ha! He thought that I was playing a fine joke upon him. *Fassere* Kalimuckra."

Vangs lighted a cigar, which drew very well. Johnson tried a pipe, as did the professor, and soon they were all smoking, much to their satisfaction, for a sailor likes his tobacco more than his grog, and with their pipes, they sipped their wine.

"We're lucky to meet with you, cap," remarked Vangs.

"Oh, no; ze luck is all on my side," replied *petit* Bourgain, with his usual politeness.

"Can you give us a shelter to sleep in?"

"You shall have two rooms in my house, with plenty good cotton bed. Ze cotton-plant grow here, and I make excellent bed. Do not yourself trouble about ze *chambre à coucher*," answered Bourgain.

"It seems like a dream," exclaimed Vangs. "We little thought we should get such bully quarters when we were riding before the wind in that open boat. I, for one, did not expect to live long, making sure the cannibals would eat us."

"Had you gone to any of the islands to the westward," answered Bourgain, "it is for certain that you would have been eaten up, *mangé entierement, sans aucun*—that is what you say, eaten up whole, without sauce."

"Does your king make war upon others?"

"No. He used to fight once, now he fights no more," answered Bourgain, "unless some of ze others come over here. Zen we take our part, and we drive ze enemy away."

"Are you a fighting man?"

"Every Frenchman is born a soldier," answered Bourgain, drawing himself up proudly. "*C'est nom*, I have kill of ze savage ten and twenty in one day."

"What do they attack you for?"

"To make ze prisoners, whom zey roast and eat. All ze tribes fight for captives to eat at ze great feast. If zey had ze advantage of ze good missionary, it would be fine group of islands. Teach som to be Christians, and then trade will follow."

"Have you made up your mind to stop here all your life?"

"*Mais, non.* I love *ma belle France*," replied Bourgain, his eyes flashing with enthusiasm as he spoke. "It is five years since I see her shores, but the great God is good, and me, *petit* Bourgain, live in hope that I shall see my country again. Zen I die happy. Oh, monsieur! *Je vous assure* zat France has all the affection that there is in my heart."

"I like France, too," exclaimed Vangs, "but I feel sorry for her."

"Sorry for her! Why, monsieur? You are my guest, but you must not insult me under my own roof, for when you say you are sorry for the beautiful land that has given me birth, it is ver' hard. France is a prosperous co'ntree—mistress of the world."

"You haven't heard about the Franco-Prussian war?"

"Hey? *Mon Dieu!* what you tell me?" cried Bourgain, clutching his arm in a frenzy of excitement.

"There's been a war, Napoleon declared war against Prussia, and had to fight united Germany."

"Napol-a-on make war. Well, it was a *Bertin, n'est pas?* Zey was in Bertin in tree week—hey?"

"No, sir. In three months the Prussians captured Napoleon and the flower of his army at Sedan. Metz surrendered to the Prussians with the Imperial Guard. Paris was invested, and capitulated after a short siege. Napoleon died in exile. A Commune was established in Paris. Thiers and MacMahon fought the Communists, beat them, and now France has a republic, after losing every battle but one, at Orleans, and paying the Germans a huge indemnity."

The tears started to *petit* Bourgain's eyes, and his face displayed the most profound grief.

"Oh, why did I not die in ze wreck?" he exclaimed. "Why did I live to hear this bad news? But we were *traître*—zat is, betrayed. Was it not so?"

"Your army existed chiefly on paper. Instead of having a million men, you only had half that number to fight a million and a half of Prussians."

Bourgain's face cleared.

"There it is!" he cried. "We have always been betrayed by our kings. *Dis donc*, I shall tell you why it is not so bad after all. Napol-a-on was a traitor, a liar, a great big thief. *Dis donc, mon ami*—listen, my friend—we have beat ze Germans before and can beat them again. It was only making ze square for Ulm and ze first Napoleon campaigns. *Le petit sérporal*—zat ees, ze first Bonaparte—great man. Badinguet, ze third of ze Bonapartes, a *coquin*—rascal, bad man. He is gone. Now we have ze republic, and we have pay ze Prussians, hey?"

Petit Bourgain showed the elastic nature of his temperament by the easy way in which he threw off the depression which he felt on first hearing of the defeat of his beloved France.

Soon afterward, a noise of drums announced the arrival of some exalted personage.

This was King Kalimuckra, who came, accompanied by a guard of honor fifty strong, all of whom were armed with wooden swords and spears.

(To be continued.)

"Rob Rollalong" was commenced in No. 672.

Talks with Boys about Foreign Lands.

DOVER CASTLE.

THE famous town and castle of Dover was formerly a place of the greatest importance, and accounted the key and barrier of the island of Great Britain. The name of Dover is from the British *Dufyrrha*, signifying a steep place. The Saxons called it *Dorfa* or *Dofris*, which, in Doomsday Book, is softened into Dover. Its situation must have rendered it a part of consequence from a very early period, and it was a hill-fort long prior to the invasion of Julius Cæsar. There is a tradition that Arviragus, the British chief, fortified himself here when he refused to pay the tribute imposed by Cæsar; and that there, afterward, King Arthur also held his residence. Another tradition assigns the foundations of the fortress to Cæsar, and the ancient watch-tower in the upper part of the Castle Hill is unquestionably of Roman workmanship.

The present height of the Pharos is nearly forty feet, but the upper part is of more modern origin, most probably of the time of Sir Thomas Brynghan, who repaired it when Constable of Dover Castle in the reign of Henry V., his arms being sculptured on the north front. Immediately contiguous to the Pharos is an ancient church, generally stated to have been built by King Lucius in the second century; but the walls are of a much later period, though Roman materials have been worked up therein. The church has been recently restored.

The ascent of the Castle, on the summit of a cliff more than three hundred feet in height, was not overlooked by William, Duke of Normandy, who, immediately after the battle of Hastings, took possession of it. He assigned the custody of it to Odo, Bishop of Bayeux, his half-brother, whom he created Earl of Kent.

The Kentishmen did not, however, like their new masters, and made an attempt to surprise the fortress, with Eustace, Earl of Boulogne, who had crossed the sea in the night, to lead them, well-furnished with scaling-ladders. But the watch descried them; the soldiers within the Castle allowed them to approach the wall, and while they were attempting to scale it, the soldiers opened the gates and sallied out, setting upon them so furiously with such fury that they compelled Eustace and a few others to return to his ship, the rest being either slain by the sword, destroyed by falling from the cliff, or "devoured by the sea." After this, the king seized the Castle into his own hands, and fortified it anew. Henry II. rebuilt the keep on the Norman plan, and otherwise fortified the Castle. Louis the Dauphin besieged it to assist the discontented Barons; but Hubert de Burgh, then Governor, so strenuously defended it with one hundred and forty soldiers only, exclusively of his own servants, that the enemy retired after much loss.

Many alterations were made in Dover Castle by different sovereigns till the time of Charles I., when it was wrested from the King's power by a merchant named Drake, a partisan of the Parliament, who, on the night of August 1st, 1642, took it by surprise with the aid of twenty men only. By ropes and scaling-ladders he ascended to the top of the cliff on the seaside, which, being considered inaccessible, was left unguarded. The fortress was now left dismantled for upward of a century, when the threats of invasion thrown out after the French Revolution led the Government to put the Castle into a state of strength sufficient to withstand a regular siege.

Within the keep is the ancient well mentioned in the document by which Harold surrendered the Castle to William the Conqueror. This well is said to be three hundred and seventy feet in depth; and at no great distance, all within the Saxon works, are three other wells reported to be nearly as deep. The Castle consists of two wards, an upper and lower, and occupies about thirty-five acres of ground. The lower ward is surrounded by an irregular wall or curtain, flanked at unequal distances by towers of different forms. The oldest is said to have been built by Earl Godwin, and bears his name. Nine of the other towers were built in the Norman times, and named from Sir John de Pinnoes and the eight approved warriors whom he selected for the defense of this fortress. The Constable's Tower is the principal entrance to the Lower Court; this entrance has a deep ditch, crossed by a drawbridge, massive gate, portcullis, etc.

The Keep, or Palace Tower, rebuilt by Henry II., is in fine preservation, and is used as a magazine. In the thickness of the wall—from eighteen to twenty feet—run the galleries, so contrived as to render it nearly impossible for the arrows or missive weapons of an enemy to do any execution within them.

Near the edge of the cliff is a beautiful piece of brass ordnance, twenty-four feet long, cast at Utrecht in the year 1544, and generally called "Queen Elizabeth's pocket-pistol," it having been presented by the States of Holland to that sovereign; it carries a twelve-pound shot, but is entirely unfit for use. There are several very curious devices upon it, and some lines in old Dutch, which have been thus translated:

"O'er hill and dale I throw my Ball;
Breaker, my name, of mound and wall."

Among the events in the history of the Castle are the following: 1156. Henry II. at Dover, in his way to Normandy. 1189. Richard I. sailed from Dover for Jerusalem with one hundred large ships and eighty galleys. 1256. Henry III., after concluding a peace with Spain, returned through France, and landed at Dover. 1259. Richard, King of the Romans, landed at Dover, and swore to assist the Barons in their reformation. 1296. Dover Castle greatly damaged by the French. 1491. Henry VII. embarked at Dover to besiege Boulogne. 1513. Henry VIII. embarked at Dover on board the Cinque Ports fleet, and left his Queen, Catherine of Aragon, in the Castle. 1575. Queen Elizabeth stopped some days at Dover Castle, and ordered the repair of the walls and towers. 1660. At Dover, May 25th, restoration of Charles II., who landed with his brothers, the Dukes of York and Gloucester.

CHRISTMAS GAMES.

(Continued.)

CONCERT.

THE players represent an orchestra, each one taking charge of an imaginary instrument, and going through the motions of playing upon it. Thus, "Fife" too-soos on an imaginary instrument about nine inches long; "Drum" bangs away at an invisible parchment; "Trombone" puts one hand to his mouth, and shifts the other to and fro as he grunts like a bull, an accompaniment. "Cymbals" clashes his two hands together, and each and all are kept in order by a conductor, who stands in the midst, beating time energetically. At a signal from the leader, they all go off simultaneously; but when he holds up his hand, they must stop instantaneously. He then pretends to find fault with one or more of the players, who must instantly answer with some excuse adapted to their instruments; violin pleading that he has no resin; harp that a string is broken, and so on. Any hesitation at once entails a forfeit, as does also an answer not immediately connected with the instrument of the person challenged.

PRUSSIAN EXERCISE.

This game furnishes a good joke, but must be played circumspectly, that no offense may be given, and no unpleasant consequences arise. The company are drawn up in line, with a sergeant and captain, the former ranging at the head of the line, the latter in front of the regiment to give the word of command. The two officers must be in the secret, and act in concert. The captain gives the order, and puts his men through their drill, they taking the time from the sergeant. After a few ordinary commands, such as "Heads up!" "Eyes right," etc., the word is given to "Ground right knee," whereupon all the men kneel down on the right knee. Then comes "Right-hands forward," whereupon the sergeant stretches out his right arm and hand horizontally in front of him, at full length. "Left hands backward," and the left arms are thrust back as nearly horizontal as possible with the shoulders. Now comes the word "Fire!" at which the sergeant gives his neighbor a push; he, taken unaware, tumbles against the next man, and down goes the whole row like a house of cards.

RED-CAP AND BLUE-CAP

is a good game, and used to be very popular at sea in the old times. Among the little middies. The penalty of a mistake was cobbling with knotted handkerchiefs; but, of course, in polite society this part of the ceremony is dispensed with; a forfeit, or something similar, being substituted. The players sit round in a circle, and represent tailors. Each has a name, and one is the master. One may take the name Blue-cap, another is Red-cap's, a third Yellow-cap, a fourth Black-cap, and so on, through as many colors as there are players. The leader then pretends to examine the work, and says, "Here's a false stitch; who made it, Blue-cap?" Blue-cap immediately answers, "Who, sir?—I, sir?" "Yes, you, sir!" "Not I, sir." "Who then, sir?" "Yellow-cap, sir." Yellow-cap must at once take up the word, and the same dialogue is repeated, "Who, sir?—I, sir?" etc., another workman being named as the delinquent. Any one who fails to answer to his name pays a forfeit. If briskly kept up, the game is a thoroughly good one.

"MY LADY'S TOILET"

is very like the "family coach." Each person represents some necessary of the toilet—brush, comb, soap, scent, hankerchief, jewel-case, etc., and the lady's maid stands in the middle of the circle and calls for any article her lady is supposed to want. The personator of that article must then jump up, or be fined a forfeit for negligence. Every now and then the delight announces that her lady wants her whole toilet, when the whole circle of players must rise and change places. The lady's-maid herself makes a bolt for a chair, and the player who is left chairless in the scuffle becomes lady's-maid.

CRAMBO, OR COPTING VERSES,

a rather intellectual game, is played in the following way: Two sets of paper slips are furnished to the players, and each writes on one of the papers a question (if in rhyme, so much the better), and on the other any noun he thinks of. The slips are then collected in two hats or baskets; the nouns in one, and the question-slips in the other; and the contents of the hat are well mixed together. The players then take at random a paper apiece out of each of the hats, so that every person has two slips—a question and a noun. The question must not only be answered by a verse written beneath it, but the noun drawn must be introduced into the verse, however foreign to the subject it may be. One of the players, for instance, may find such a question as this fall to his share, "Why did Napoleon run away at Waterloo?" and the word to introduce is "Polka." Now, to an ordinary capacity this would be a considerable puzzle, but a sharp-witted player (like the editor) would soon get out of the difficulty in something like the following manner:

"I cannot think a man would find it difficult to say,
Why Bonaparte at Waterloo thought best to run away.
The ball became unpleasant there, though 'twas kept up with fire,
And 'stead of 'Polka,' 'gallopades, which he did not admire."

Or suppose the question to be, "What time of year is best for traveling?" and the word "Arithmetic"—a rather incongruous union of ideas—the verse would be constructed on something of the following plan:

"When all the trees are budding, and all the hedges ring
With merry songs of little birds, in the pleasant days of Spring;
'Tis then that I would travel through balmy days and nights,
For it passes my 'Arithmetic' to tell of Spring's delights."

The lines need not be so long as in the specimens we have given; any meire, from the shortest to the longest, will do.

YES AND NO.

One of the players thinks of any person or thing, and the rest sit round and ask him questions about it, which he answers with "yes" or "no," taxing care to give no other explanations. From the information thus gained each gives a guess as to what the thought was. If the questions are ingeniously framed the solution is generally discovered, unless the "thought" be particularly abstruse. The game is a very good one and we herewith emphatically recommend it, peculiarly as affording an opportunity of "cooling down" after a romp.

(To be continued.)

FOR EATERS OF PEARS.

IT is not generally known how pears came to be peeled. If we are to believe a French legend on the subject, they never were peeled till the year 1540, when a cultivator at Montreuil, having discovered that by growing pears against a wall he could ripen them some weeks before the regular time, gathered two of the finest and sent them by his son to the King. Francis I., having looked at the gift with some surprise, made the boy sit down at the table in front of him, and, handing him one of the pears, said:

"It will be unjust if you do not also enjoy the fruit of your work." And you beginning to eat the other, peel and all, when the young peasant drew his knife from his pocket and peeled his pear.

"How is that?" exclaimed the King. "Do you peel your pears before eating them? That is waste."

"I will tell you, sire," replied the boy. "While I was coming here, I let one of the pears fall in the mud, and I do not know whether it is yours or mine."

Thereupon the king ordered a knife and peeled his pear, and thus the custom became established.

A BALD-HEADED professor, reproving a youth for the exercise of his fists, said, "We fight with our heads at this college." The young man reflected a moment and then replied, "Ah, I see, and you have butted all your hair off."

"Do you know why you are like a donkey, W——?" "Like a donkey?" echoed W——, opening his eyes wide. "No, I don't." "Do you give it up?" "I do." "Because your better-half is stubbornness itself." "That's not bad. Ha, ha! I'll give that to my wife when I get home." "Mrs. W——," he asked, as he sat down to supper, "do you know why I am like a donkey?" He waited a moment, expecting his wife to give it up. But she didn't. She looked at him somewhat commiseratingly as she answered: "I suppose you were born so."

OUR LETTER-BOX.

TOMMYO BOY.—1st. Liszt, Rubenstein, Mendelssohn, Von Weber, Hommel and Schumann. 2d. If you read the story carefully, you will find that they did fall out (among themselves). 3d. The population of Rochester, N. Y., in 1875, was 91,313. 4th. The Five Points is a part of the City of New York. 5th. We think it very likely that we shall take your advice about the matter. 6th. *The New York Illustrated Times*, 55 Park Place. 7th. Take a good dose of opening medicine, and keep your mouth clean.

ONE OF THE MYSTIC THREE.—1st. R. G.—. 2d. You promise to be very strong, especially if your chest is well developed. 3d. We cannot tell you for certain; ask Appleton & Co. 4th. Send it direct to Frank Leslie's Publishing House, 53, 55 and 57 Park Place, New York City.

GUERAVE WORTH.—Yes; we will do our best to please you in a short time. Yes. At almost any large bookstore.

TOM S.—We do not think that they will. Certainly, we will do anything to oblige our readers.

WALTER MCDERMOTT.—You have the idea exactly. If you read the notice carefully, you are sure to understand it. It is our desire to get some good original answers from our young friends.

GEO. R. DAVIS.—We are sorry to inform you that we always have about ten times more matter on hand than we can use, but if you desire to have some of them used with your name to them, we will try to oblige you, though we cannot, for the reason that we have just mentioned, pay for any matter of that kind.

WILLIAM HOWITT.—We shall be only too happy to oblige you if you will send us the number of the paper you want. We shall be happy to do so, if it is considered good enough by our readers. Do you want to sell it, or do you mean a short sketch? "Jack Hathaway" undoubtedly went through the adventures he tells you about. Your writing is very good, and your composition all that can be desired.

TOM JOHNS.—Take plenty of exercise, eat moderately, and drink but two glasses of ale a day.

SALVATOR.—We do not advise you to fight; quarrelsome boys are never liked.

GEO. BLAISDELL.—We do keep a complete file, but it would take too long to hunt for what you want. The following is the receipt for making bird-lime: Bird-lime is prepared by boiling the middle bark of the European holly (*ilex aquifolium*), or the young shoots of the elder and other plants, as the mistletoe and other parasites, separating the gummy matter from the liquid, and leaving it for a fortnight in a moist, cool place, to become viscid. It is next pounded into a tough paste, well washed, and put aside for some days to ferment. Some oil or thin grease is incorporated with it, when it is ready for use. Bird-lime is so tenacious that small birds, alighting upon sticks daubed over with it, are unable to escape. It is used also for destroying insects.

L. B. GARSIDE.—1st. There are a number of breeders in the neighborhood of Paterson, N. J., and Manchester, Conn. Should advise you to read an article in the *Popular Monthly* for December on "Silkworms and Silk-Breeding." 2d. Almost any large fancy-goods store in any large city will purchase good scroll work. 3d. Twenty-five cents a line.

J. B. OKE.—1st. You are allowed to send as many drawings as you like. 2d. You can compete every week, for each competition is separate. 3d. You promise to be very skillful in the use of your pencil. 4th. You are above the average in height, but will, of course, fill out a great deal more as you grow older. Try to develop your chest as much as possible.

THE DRAWING-TABLE.

SIXTH COMPETITION.

PRIZE-WINNERS.

1.—S. W. Bramwell, Toledo, O.

2.—Albert Fuentés, 323 West Thirtieth Street, New York City.

3.—A. W. Storm, 726 Broadway, New York City.

HONORABLE MENTION.

J. B. Britton, Edgewater, Richmond Co., S. I.
John L. Kopt, 223 Avenue A, New York City.
Master Willie A. Williams, Canajoharie, N. Y.
Michael Rosenthal, 76 Third Street, New York City.
Arthur Brightman, Box 444, Newport, R. I.
J. A. Mulvey, Dover, N. J.
Harry Reeve, 268 South Ninth Street, Brooklyn, E. D.
William Millman, Jr., 324 West Fifty-first Street, New York City.
Daniel R. Hogan, 241 West Thirty-seventh Street, New York City.
F. S. Misse, 716 Garrison Avenue, St. Louis, Mo.
Frank M. Shiver, 13 Spring Street, Charleston, S. C.
Augustus Peverolly, 3 Bank Street, New York City.
E. Loure, 124 Graham Avenue, Greenpoint, L. I.
Master L. J. Carter, Salt Lake City, Utah Ter.
E. B. Gumbie, 828 Belgrade Street, Philadelphia, Pa.
Bert Root, Medina, Ohio.
J. B. Keating, 130 Cayler Street, Greenpoint, L. I.
Will M. Oliver, care of J. B. Routler & Co., Cambridge, Ohio.
Master Frank Halliday, Cokeville, Westmorland Co., Pa.
G. B. Schirmer, 21 East Washington Street, Indianapolis, Ind.
John L. Coleman, 14 Symonds Avenue, Springfield, Mass.
B. Harrison, 38 Camp Street, New Orleans, La.
Bert Kintz, Sharpsburg, Alleghany Co., Pa.
Master Sidney S. Bantoo, Salamanca, Cattaraugus Co., N. Y.
A. Foreman, 55 Liberty Street, New York City.
G. S. Murphy, Yottenville, S. I.
Geo. Ingalls, 13 Pearl Street, Lynn, Mass.
Chas. Shaw, Box 56, South Cleveland, Ohio.
Charley Drake, 626 Washington Avenue, Brooklyn, N. Y.
Alex. W. Wallace, 254 Whitehall Street, Atlanta, Ga.
Chas. A. Devlan, 43 Bringhurst Street, Germantown, Philadelphia, Pa.
Albert Wanner, care of Thonet Bros., 806 Broadway, New York City.
Howard Crouse, 37 Penna Street, Baltimore, Md.
Wilbur R. Hyde, 1096 Lafayette Avenue, Brooklyn, N. Y.
Jules Strobel, School No. 9, New Orleans, La.
Charley Berham, Durham, N. C.
W. D. England, Washington Co., Washington, Pa.
Master Harry E. D. Melvin, Winona, Minn.
Sumner Kittle, 7 West Thirty-first Street, New York City.
Leon Cognard, 27 Abbott Street, Detroit, Mich.
Maggie M. Rose, Romeo, Macomb Co., Mich.
Miss Boys, 13 Huron Street, Toronto, Canada.
Alex. Taylor, Passaic, N. J.
Master William T. Keough, 72 Border Street, East Boston, Mass.
Louis Van Bremen, 38 St. Marks Place, New York City.
F. T. L. Boyle, Brooklyn Institute, Washington and Concord Streets, Brooklyn, N. Y.

The following candidates have been heard from, and their drawings will be decided upon next week:

Van Allen Johnson, Adam Schaffer, John H. Turner, M. S. Meyberg, John O'Neill, Felix Gudechinsky, Robert Lynch, Percy S. Stiats, William B. Moore, Sherman Baer, Edgar S. Taylor, Frank Patterson, Jr., Geo. Turk, Albert Sousse, Edward Pritchard, J. L. Beers, Geo. Burger, William Webster, William S. Cramford, W. C. Kelly, R. W. Swayze, Madgie Scott, Harry S. Glover, Henry Higgins, Louis S. Rae, John Byrne, W. Ehinger, H. F. Baker, G. N. Horne, Geo. A. Jobes, Harry H. Maclellan, Peter O'Dell, John L. Hefferman, A. Lipphard, James P. Winslow, Samuel I. Davidson, E. H. Forrest, H. S. Logan, Philip Gannon, John Griem, John Conoway, James Donohue, J. B. Orr, Marcus Liepsiger, Master Willie N. Swan, Albert N. Roberts, C. Turnbull, Chas. Prior, Miss Minnie A. Logan, A. N. Storm, Master Charley Stumm, Master Harry French.

DRAWING TABLE NOTICE.

MANY of our young competitors neglect to send us their correct addresses, and the consequence is that their certificates of merit do not reach.

Three letters have recently been returned to us, one addressed to Thomas F. Byron, another to Thomas Henk, and another to Inez Brown.

We should be very much obliged if they would send us their right addresses, so that we can forward their certificates.

A contributor from Washington complains that he sent a picture and did not see his or her name mentioned, and at the same time sent us a *second* contribution, and *again* forgot to sign his or her name, or even mention the address. Of course, under the circumstances, they must not blame the editor.

For the benefit of any of our young readers who may not have noticed our previous announcement, we beg to state that, for the present, we are giving three prizes for drawings executed by any of our young friends without any assistance from teachers, parents or others. The prizes are $3, $2, and $1, respectively, accompanied by a certificate of merit, inscribed with the name and address of the winner. Any drawing that is not quite good enough for one of the prizes, but which has great merit, will receive honorable mention in our columns, as well as a certificate of merit.

All our young readers must try, and if they do not win a prize the first time, let them try again.

THE ROUND TABLE.

PRIZES.

To be Read by all who Send Answers.

FOR A COMPLETE SET OF ANSWERS TO ALL THE ENIGMAS, ETC., IN THIS NUMBER.

For the best and earliest, due allowances being made for the distance of each competitor - $5.00
For the next best - - - - - - 2.50
For the third in merit and promptness - - 1.00

N. B.—There is no prize offered for an answer to only one puzzle or riddle. The answers must be to ALL. Competitors in all parts of the country have an equal chance.

ANSWERS TO RIDDLES, ETC., IN No. 680.

1. Lance, Clean. 2. Gold, Orange, Antelope, Teak. 3. Starling. 4. Score, Scar, Car. 5. May, Yam. 6. Brink, Rink, Ink. 7. Prussia, Russia. 8. Doe.

WINNERS OF PRIZES IN No. 680.

1.—Miss May E. Banning, care *Daily News*, Newport, R. I.

2.—Miss Nellie Hall, Brandon, Rutland Co., Vt.

3.—Fred. C. Lockey, Concord Avenue, near One Hundred and Sixty-fifth Street, Morrisania, N. Y.

The following competitors gave correct answers to all the questions, but were slightly distanced by time:

L. Chappine, 262 South Fourth Street, Brooklyn, E. D.
G. C. Bigelow, 10 La Grange Street, Worcester, Mass.
Charles A. Crouch, Bramford, New Haven Co., Conn.
N. H. Millmann, Jr., 324 West Fifty-first Street, New York City.

ENIGMAS, CHARADES, ETC.

1.—CHARADE.

1. My second is often done on my first, and my whole is made to be hidden.

2. My whole is innumerable, three-fifths stand at the door, two-fifths are the commencement of a house of worship.

3. My first is the outer face, my second is above, my whole is to find out.

4. A conjunction and a weight, making an article of dress.

2.—DECAPITATIONS.

1. My whole is a kind of ship; behead me, and I am a kind of ship; behead me again, and I am a word used on board a ship.

2. My whole is a bird; behead me, and I am still a bird.

3. My whole is dexterity; behead me, and I am to destroy; behead me again, and I am unwell.

4. My whole is to rise; behead me, and I am a spring; behead me again, and I am a measure.

5. My whole is a very useful article; beheaded, it will be something that keeps my whole secure.

6. My whole is to squeeze; behead me, and I am a vehicle; again, and I am water.

7. My whole is to exhibit; behead me, and I am to ill-use; again, and I am part of the body.

8. My whole is an English town; behead me, and I am one of a European nation; behead me again, and I am a kind of bed.

9. Whole, I am a naval commander; beheaded, I am a military commander.

3.—CHRONOGRAM.

The year in which a terrible massacre took place. (The initials of the answers in Roman figures give the date.)

1. A science.
2. The author of "Gregar Hill."
3. A Neapolitan sect of revolutionists.
4. A Mexican State.
5. A famous Grecian soothsayer.
6. One of the Walter Scott's novels.
7. An Egyptian deity.

4.—PROFESSIONS OR SCIENCES (transposed).

1. I can eat hams, Tim (plural).
2. Last, O Rogers!
3. Go to Giles's.
4. Arm a Popish child.
5. Sting Lion.
6. I! can't I hem a mat! (singular).

5.—ANAGRAMS.

1. My first is an animal; transpose me, and I grow on marshy places.

2. My first is to exist; transpose me, and I am what all have done; transposed again, I am mean.

3. I am to spoil; transposed, an animal; again, a part of the body.

4.—I am to peruse; transposed, I am expensive; transposed again, and I defy.

6.—NUMBERED CHARADE.

I am a word of 9 letters. My 1, 5, 6 is a drawing; my 8, 7, 5, 3 is the cry of a wild beast; my 3, 2, 6, 9 is ready; my 5, 6, 9 is an animal, my 3, 5, 1 is another animal; my 6, 9, 5, 8 is a fruit; and my whole is a town in Hindoostan.

7.—HIDDEN RIVERS.

1. How beautiful the sky looks this morning!
2. We made each of the boys a present on their birthdays.
3. For the glory of God was man created.
4. I had on my best hat that morning.
5. We had our own team taken from us, so that we could not defend ourselves.

Harriet found "Gulliver's Travels" covered in dust in her trunk.

CAUTION.

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GAZELLE-HUNTING IN ALGERIA, NORTH AFRICA.

GAZELLE-HUNTING IN ALGERIA.

By WILLIAM HARDING.

I WAS on a visit to a friend of mine, a Caïd or governor of a small part of the country, when one fine evening, between the last cup of coffee and the first glass of wine, he proposed a gazelle-hunt for next morning. I need scarcely say that I was only too glad to accept his proposal. At four o'clock the next morning I was rudely roused from my peaceful slumbers by the lusty lungs of my friend, who, wishing to be sure to wake me, struck up an Arab song. Now, if there's one thing that will surely drive sleep from my pillow it is an Arab song. Next to that doleful ditty, my sensitive organs are surely aroused by the unharmonious lays of a benighted cat, or the unmusical strains of a brass band out of luck. I sprang from my bed, and with tears in my eyes begged of him to defer the rest of his musical lay for another occasion. He complied, though not without a contemptuous remark on my utter inability to appreciate good music.

The sun was rising in golden rays on the eastern horizon as we mounted our horses in the Caïd's courtyard. Our party consisted of eight persons—the Caïd, a jolly, middle-aged Arab, myself and six of the Caïd's followers. The Caïd was armed with a good double-barreled gun. I carried a Martini-Henry rifle slung on my back. The morning being rather chilly, we indulged in a smack of absinthe, and then giving our horses their heads, we started on our journey. Our pace was soon reduced to a trot, and shortly afterward to a walk.

We had now reached the boundaries of the Salt Lakes of Sfissifa. As far as the eye could reach nothing was to be seen but one continuous sea of salt. To the uninitiated it seemed as if you were standing on the shores of a mighty ocean, whose gigantic bosom had been momentarily wrapped in repose.

After we had admired this magnificent deception for some time, we rode along the skirts of this tantalizing ocean, and cautiously approached a spot indicated by our guides. The Caïd informed me that we were sure to find some gazelles there, as they come to certain spots near the Salt Lakes and lick its briny shores with relish. Suddenly one of the guides made a sign of warning, and we redoubled our attention, keeping cautiously under the lee of the sand-hills, and stalking our game on horseback.

In the distance I at last perceived a herd of about two thousand gazelles, quietly grazing on the sparse tuft of sun-dried slash, or luxuriously lapping the salt from the borders of the lake. It was a splendid sight for the sportsman's eyes—the brown, black and white hides contrasting strongly with the hot sand, burning sky, dried-up slash and briny lake. The beautiful creatures seemed to be on the perpetual *qui vive*, for, being divided into several bands, each band seemed to have a sentry, or, rather, "man on the lookout." The videttes did their duty well in every instance, for their heads were continually in the air, and their sharp ears pointed to the breeze. The Caïd sent four of his men round by a circuitous route amongst the sand-hills, so as to take them in the rear. I cannot describe the fearful impatience with which I waited for the signal; it was only with trouble that I could prevent myself from firing amongst them. At last the Caïd gave the signal, and, rifle in hand, we charged the gazelles. They immediately fled from us in a scamper, but were soon met by the other party. This caused a momentary hesitation among the leaders of the gazelles, and we profited by it to use both whip and spur to get nearer to them. By some mischance the Caïd became separated from the rest of the party. We heard his shots, and he afterward told us that he had a most exciting time for the short time that he was alone. In crossing a field, his horse stumbled, and, in endeavoring to prevent a fall, the Caïd dropped his rifle. To have stopped to dismount and regain the rifle would have been to lose the gazelle which was at the time fleeing before him. He therefore seized his revolver and dashed on. Soon, however, he rejoined our party, and together we rushed forward. It was a wild, hot, daring ride, for rabbit-holes were on every side; up one sandhill, down another, on we went helter-skelter. At last we opened fire into the middle of the herd, loading and firing as fast as we could. I soon knocked two over, and was dashing away in hot pursuit of some more, when down I came, horse and all. I had an indistinct feeling of thousands of sharp feet dashing over my body, when I fainted, and was lost to all knowledge of what was going on.

When I came to my senses, the kind Caïd was bathing my temples, and from under the shade of our little tent I could see that a good meal was in preparation. In our tent were twenty splendid skins, and the Caïd informed me that there would have been twice as many killed but for the fear of wounding me or my horse, for all the herd had passed over me in their flight. We made a good meal, rested during the heat of the day, and returned in the evening, heartily pleased with our day's sport.

A PORTUGUESE HEROINE.—"SHE SEIZED STOUT HOLD OF THE WOLF, AND THEN, AFTER A STRUGGLE, CONTRIVED TO BLIND HIM WITH A STONE, AND EVENTUALLY KILLED HIM."

A PORTUGUESE HEROINE.

A CORRESPONDENT of the *Pall Mall Gazette* at Lisbon vouches for the truth of the following narrative, which he translates from the *Diario de Noticias*: At the distance of one kilometre from the village of Fratel, near Niza—*i. e.*, on the frontier of Spain and Portugal, near the town of Portalegre—Theresa Maria, who was carrying her husband's dinner to him in the fields, was held by a little shepherd boy that a wolf was prowling about the place.

Wishing to see one for the first time in her life, she put down her basket and climbed up to a high place to which the boy directed her. There she saw the animal in the act of devouring a lamb.

The shepherd boy began shouting and throwing stones, to see whether it would let go its prey, and the wolf, in its fury, then attacked the poor little fellow, jumping up at his face, tearing the flesh from his jaws, and throwing him upon the ground.

The woman, seeing the boy's imminent danger, in an impulse of heroic self-devotion, ran on the wolf wholly unarmed, seized tight hold of him, and then, after a struggle, contrived to blind him with a stone, and eventually killed him.

Meanwhile, the boy whom she had rescued ran, wounded as he was, to seek help in the village. While several villagers were coming up, armed with guns, stones and sticks, to kill the beast and save the woman from its fangs, she was returning to the village covered with blood, and with her arms, hands and face terribly wounded.

She said that at times she was on the point of being overcome, but contrived to keep the animal's throat in the close hold of her left arm, while hitting him hard on the head with a stone which she was able to pick up. She was taken to the Niza hospital.

It is with regret that all will read what I have now unfortunately to add—that exactly a month afterward the poor creature died there of her wounds. She has left eight children, six of whom are very young, and a distracted husband, to mourn her loss; but she found comfort in her last sufferings, and under the pain of such a parting, from the recollection that she had given her life for another. The English and Portuguese have sent some £110 as a small consolation to a poor and industrious family who have to mourn a noble heart taken from them.

In a postscript, written two days later, the correspondent says: "I am sorry, indeed, to have to add to the narrative that the little shepherd boy for whom the brave woman sacrificed her life is dead also. She was allowed to console her dying hours with the belief that she had perished in saving a life. But it was not to be so. The poor child died in the terrible sufferings of hydrophobia. Besides the subscriptions raised on behalf of the bereaved husband and the orphans, another has very properly been started to erect a monument at Niza, to that such a deed may not be forgotten."